THE

VALLEY

OF THE

NILE

INTERIOR OF THE GREAT TEMPLE AT DENDERA.

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THE

VALLEY OF THE NILE:

Its Tombs, Temples, and Monuments.

By

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"Where Nile, redundant o'er his summer bed,
From his broad bosom life and verdure flings,
And broods o'er Egypt with his wat'ry wings."
GRAY.

"The king of floods, old Homer's Nile, appears."
LORD LINDSAY.

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Preface.

THE imagination always turns with vivid interest to the land of Egypt. A never-dying romance and a sublime mystery attend its annals, its pyramids, and its temples, its famous river and its wide-spread deserts. This romance and this mystery still prevail. It is true that of late years the researches of persevering Egyptologers have elucidated some important facts in illustration of its history, and deciphered a few of the secrets engraven on its monuments; but enough remains concealed to stimulate further inquiry, and the little that is accurately known only shows how much more has still to be discovered.

In the following pages, however, antiquarian questions are not discussed. They contain brief but, it is believed, not imperfect descriptions of the venerable memorials of ancient Egypt which are scattered along the banks of the Nile—memorials half buried in the sand, shattered by the earthquake, broken by the barbarism of man, but still full of the highest interest, and remarkable for their testimony to an advanced civilization. General allusions are introduced to the more prominent characteristics of the Egyptian landscape. Starting from Alexandria, the author conducts the reader up the Nile-valley to Thebes, and Syene, and Philæ, and across the confines of Nubia to the mysterious Meroë, following in the footsteps of those intrepid travellers who have made the highway of ancient commerce so familiar to English ears. Something is said of the religion, the man-

ners, and the customs of the strange inhabitants of this once-powerful monarchy, and the opinions of the most esteemed authorities on such subjects have been carefully compared. A concise sketch of Egyptian chronology is prefixed. With reference to "names" and "dates," the views of Mr. Poole have generally been adopted, though the theories of other Egyptologers have engaged the author's attention. It is hardly necessary to state that the annals of Egypt, up to the date of the Persian invasion, are still enshrouded in an atmosphere of doubt and speculation, and that its earlier chronicles are scarcely less mythical than those of Chaldæa or Assyria. The authority of Herodotus and Manetho cannot be regarded as unimpeachable; and to many of the most important enigmas on the monuments, Egyptology has not yet found the key. It is, perhaps, to be feared that the work so ardently begun will never be completed.

> "The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
> Unfinished must remain!"

All, however, that the author has aimed at is, to put before the young reader an outline of the present condition of historical knowledge; and he would fain hope that as in itself a concise and compendious summary, and as an introduction to more elaborate works, his little volume will be found acceptable.

W. H. D. A.

March 1867.

Authorities.

To enumerate all the works—history, travel, and antiquarian research—which have been devoted to Egypt and her great river, would occupy a far larger space than we have at our disposal. The subjoined list, therefore, only professes to give those which have been chiefly consulted in the compilation of the following pages, and we are fully aware that many of great merit are omitted from it. But the young student who wishes to carry his Egyptian studies beyond the outlines sketched in our little volume, cannot consult the following authorities without advantage.

Baker, Sir Samuel—The Albert N'yanza, Great Lakes, and Sources of the Nile (London, 1866). See also Edinburgh Review, July 1866, and Quarterly Review, July 1866.

Bartlett—The Nile Boat, with Illustrations (London, 1850).

Belzoni—Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, &c., in Egypt and Nubia (London, 1822).

Birch—Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphics, prefixed to "Egyptians in the Time of the Pharaohs," by Sir J. G. Wilkinson (London, 1857).

Bunsen—Ægyptens-Stelle (Hamburg and Gotha, 1845–57). Translated under title of "Egypt's Place in the World's History."

Burckhardt—Travels in Nubia, performed in 1813 (London, 1821).

Cailliaud—Voyage au Meroë, Fleuve Blanc, &c. (Paris, 1826, 1827).

Denon—Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt (Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte). Translated by Aikin (London, 1802).

Hamilton, Sir W.—Remarks on Several Parts of Turkey. Part I. Ægyptiaca (London, 1810).

Heath, Rev. Dunbar I.—Exodus Papyri (London, 1855).

Heeren—Historical Researches into the Politics, Intercourse, and Trade of the Carthaginians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians (Oxford, 1838).

THE VALLEY OF THE NILE.

Introductory.

EGYPT.

"A land where all things always seem the same."
TENNYSON.

OF all the nations of the Old World, Egypt is, perhaps, the most attractive. Time has invested it with a strange and solemn charm, with an air of mysterious romance; and its Sphinxes and Pyramids, its colossal statues and huge obelisks, all speak of a remote antiquity, to which the antiquity of Greece and Rome is but a thing of yesterday. Long before Codrus founded Athens—long, long before an Etruscan colony founded the city of Rome—Egypt was studded with populous towns, and enjoyed a high degree of civilization. Long before Pythagoras taught philosophy, or Homer sang the deeds of Achilles, Egypt was the home of a mystic religion, a recondite philosophy, and a complete literature. Its history extends back to a period three or

four thousand years before the birth of Christ, and many of its monuments are the oldest memorials of human handiwork existing in the world. It was a powerful and wealthy kingdom in the days of Joseph; Moses was educated in its schools to fit him for the guidance of the Jewish people; and its Pyramids rose by the banks of the Nile at an epoch contemporary with that of Abraham. Egypt, in fact, was the cradle of the world's civilization. Greece derived from thence its art and its science, which, improving by the light of its own exquisite imagination, it taught to Imperial Rome; and from Rome the waves of knowledge spread over all Western Europe.

And such as it was in the dawn of time, such is it now! Surely no other land on the face of the globe has undergone so little change. Its monuments have decayed, but its Pyramids remain; its great cities have fallen into ruins, but its language survives; the Nile still fertilizes its sandy tracts; the crocodile still basks on the great river's slimy banks; the *khamsins* still scorch the meadows with their burning breath; the water-wheel is plied by the husbandman as in the days of Pharaoh—monotony, monotony, is written everywhere on the face of the land.

Egypt occupies the north-eastern corner of the African continent, where it is linked to that of Asia by the Isthmus of Suez. It stretches inland from the Mediterranean to the first cataract of the Nile, that of Assouan the ancient Syene, or from lat. 24° 6′ to 31° 31′ N. The Red Sea forms its eastern boundary; on the west it is bordered by the ever-shifting sands of the Libyan Desert. Its length, fol-

lowing the line of the Nile, is about 550 miles; its breadth may be measured by that of the valley of the Nile, for the cultivated territory only extends to the limits of the river's yearly floods. Three-fourths of the Egypt shown upon our maps are a barren and rocky waste, and except the limited valley already spoken of, the only inhabitable territory is in Lower Egypt, or the Delta; an area of between 6000 and 7000 square miles. Yet has it been the theatre of great events; and we know from the annals of Holland, Palestine, and our own England, that the deeds of a people are not measured by the extent of country which they inhabit. How much does the world owe to Athens; how little to Russia!

Etymologists are unable to inform us why the Greeks called this strange country Αιγυπτος—whence comes our English "Egypt." At all events, the word is as old as the days of Homer. Its Coptic inhabitants, then as now, named their country *Kemi*, or the Black Land, in allusion to the colour of its soil; the Hebrews, *Masr* or *Mitsraim*, modified by the Assyrians into *Musr*. It was anciently divided into forty-four nomes, or departments: when the Romans conquered it, these were simplified into Augusta Prima, Augusta Secunda, and Ægyptiaca: and now it is distributed into Musr-el-Bahri, or the Delta; the Faioum, El Bastani, or Middle Egypt; and Es Said, or Upper Egypt. These three regions are subdivided into thirteen provinces.

Its history is a history of wonder, and goes back, as I have said, to a period when history can hardly be said to have begun. By means of the chronicle

of Manetho, an Egyptian, compiled about 300 B.C. from documents probably then in existence; of the hieroglyphical inscriptions deciphered on its monuments, and the papyri found among its mummies and ruins; it has been ascertained that Egypt, as an independent kingdom, was successively ruled by thirty dynasties of kings. The 1st was that of Menes, or MEN, to whom different chronologists assign different dates. He flourished, says Lepsius, 3892 years B.C.; Boëkh says, 5702 B.C.; Poole, 2717 B.C.; Sharpe, 2000 B.C.; and Nolan, 2673 B.C. Who shall decide, when chronologists disagree? There is no certain evidence extant, and all that can safely be said is this: that a king named Menes, who is reputed to have been the founder of Memphis, and the first lawgiver of Egypt, flourished about 5000 years ago. His successor was named Athothis, and built the great palace of Memphis. The other monarchs of this dynasty were Kenkenes, Knephes—who built the Pyramids at Ko or Kochome—Miebis, Semempses, and Bieneches; but their names have not been identified, nor do any memorials of them exist. Their several reigns extended over a period of 253 years.

The 2nd (or Thinite) dynasty, which introduced the worship of sacred animals, ruled Egypt for about 300 years; the 3rd (or Memphite), for 200. Here the monumental history begins, for Senefern, of this dynasty, is represented as having opened up the copper mines of the Wady Magura, and conquered the Sinaitic peninsula. To the 4th dynasty chronologists ascribe an aggregate duration of 284 years, and some particulars of its kings are contained in the hieratic

papyrus known as the Canon of Turin. Of Soris there are monumental remains. The two Shufus built the mighty Pyramids of El-Ghizeh, and subdued Arabia. The elder Shufu, better known as Cheops, erected the greater of those massive enigmas by means of a forced conscription. His brother, Num-Shufu, who shared his authority for many years, laid, perhaps, the foundation of the second, which Shaf-ra, of the 5th dynasty, completed. King Men-ka-ré built the third. The most conflicting theories prevail respecting the dates of these great works, which are placed by different writers in 3229, 3095, or 2352 B.C.*

The 4th dynasty began, according to Poole, in 2352 B.C.; and the 5th, which came from the island of Elephantine, about 2150. The latter terminated with Annos or Ormos, who built the Pyramid of the Mastabat-el-Faroun, near Sakkara, and was slain by his household guards. To this dynasty, which ruled over both Upper and Lower Egypt, belonged the Pyramids at Aboo-Seir. The Memphite kings recovered the throne on the death of Annos; and the 6th dynasty, of which there are numerous memorials, contributed to Egyptian history Othoes; Phiops or Appappus, who is said to have reigned 100 years; and Queen Nitocris or Neet-akar-tee, with whom the dynasty closed. Of the next four dynasties we literally know nothing, but Manetho represents them to have included eighty-six kings, and to have extended over five centuries.

* Compare Sharpe, "History of Egypt" (London, 1846); Lepsius, "Königsbuch der Alten Ægyptie" (Berlin, 1848); Bunsen, "Egypt's Place in the World's History;" and Poole, "Horæ Ægyptiacæ."

We tread upon firmer ground when we arrive at the 11th dynasty, for the tombs of a line of monarchs named Hantifs and Mentahetps have been discovered at Gourneh and El-Assasif. The founder of the 12th was Amenemha I., who embellished Heliopolis and laid the foundation of the Diospolite, or Theban kingdom. He reigned nine years alone, and seven with Osirtesen I., his colleague, and afterwards his successor. The monuments of the latter may be seen both at Heliopolis and Beni-hassan. He subdued forty Ethiopian tribes, and in the thirtieth year of his reign shared the purple with Amenemha II. (about B.C. 2005). Then came Osirtesen II., who finally conquered Ethiopia, and in whose reign Egypt was visited by a Semitic tribe, supposed to have been Jacob and his household. Osirtesen III. was a monarch of great ability, who pushed the Egyptian frontier further to the south, and left behind him so great a renown that he was afterwards placed among the gods. Amenemha III. excavated the Mœris Lake; built the Pyramid of Crocodilopolis, and the temple of the goddess Athor at the Sarabout-el-Khadem; and constructed the world-famous *Labyrinth*, in the vicinity of the Lake Mœris. This was built of polished stone, and contained 3000 chambers, half above ground, and half below, connected by innumerable corridors and passages. In it were deposited the mummies of the sacred crocodiles. What other purpose it served, antiquaries cannot determine. According to Pliny, it was 3600 years old in his time; but there is no reason to suppose it possessed so remote an antiquity. Its remains have been explored by Lepsius.

Amenemha IV. and Queen Sebeknefru were the last monarchs of the 12th (Diospolite) dynasty.

The 13th dynasty began about B.C. 1920, and was probably tributary to the Shepherd kings of Memphis. Of these latter there were three dynasties—the 15th, 16th, and 17th. They were invaders, probably of Phœnician race;* and seem to have owed their success to some internal commotions. They overthrew the Xoite dynasty, captured Memphis, and fixed their seat of government at Haouar. Their epoch was about 2100 or 2000 B.C. The native kings of Upper Egypt, after a lapse of 400 years, found themselves sufficiently powerful to dispossess these intruders; and Aahmes I., of the 18th dynasty, captured their capital, restored the ancient worship, and united Upper and Lower Egypt under one crown (B.C. 1525).

His son and successor, to whom Thebes owed much of its glory, was Amenophis I. Thothmes I. conquered Nubia, and carried the renown of the Egyptian arms as far as Mesopotamia. Then came Thothmes II., and after him Thothmes III., who won the victory of Megiddo, subdued Syria and part of Mesopotamia, and received tribute from the islands of the Archipelago, Phœnicia, Babylon, and Assyria. An astronomical record of indisputable accuracy proves that the year 1444 B.C. fell in this able and successful monarch's reign. He was the "Edward the Third" of Egypt, and unquestionably a great administrator as well as a famous warrior.

* According to Heeren, they were Arabians—"Historical Researches," ii. 114.

The glory of the dynasty was maintained by Amenophis II., who captured Nineveh; and by Thothmes IV., who is reputed to have erected the great Sphinx. Amenophis IV. introduced the worship of a god named Aten, and his heresy was continued by the three succeeding sovereigns, until the old creed was restored in its pristine purity by Hor-em-heb or Horus.

Egypt attained its highest prosperity under the 19th dynasty, the Ramessids; the first of whom was Rameses I., who extended the frontier of his kingdom to the Wady Halfa in Nubia. Seethee I., or Sethos, was engaged in war throughout his reign, and chastised the insolence of the Shepherds or Phœnicians, and invaded Syria and Mesopotamia. He learned in Asia the rites of the deities Baal and Astarte, and introduced their worship into Egypt. His son, Rameses II., succeeded him at the early age of seven. It is a notable fact of his reign that he captured Saluma or Salem, the precursor of Jerusalem. His conquests compelled Syria to sue for peace, and he married a princess of that nation. He reorganized the Egyptian Empire, which, if we include its tributaries, must have occupied at this time an area not inferior to that of the Roman Empire under Augustus. His attention appears to have been directed to maritime affairs, and it is recorded that his fleet swept up and down the Mediterranean. Did any Egyptian vessels, I wonder, pass the Straits of Gibraltar, and navigate the western waters? All the exploits which are attributed to him could hardly have been crowded into one human life, and he appears to have gathered

to himself, in the course of time, much of the fame due to his predecessors; a process which takes place in all ancient and legendary history. The people love to invest their favourite hero with all the great achievements whose traditions float in the national memory. He becomes the focus, as it were, which draws and concentrates in itself the scattered rays of light.

Rameses flourished about 1322–1266 B.C., and was probably interred in the glorious Rameseum of Thebes; almost the sole memorial of so much genius, prosperity, power, and success!

He was succeeded by his thirteenth son, Merienptah or Pfah-men, who made Memphis the capital of the empire, and is generally identified with the Pharaoh of the Exodus,—at least, by the Rabbinical records. He introduced the heretical worship of Typhon or Seth,—Satan, or the God of Evil.

Of his successors, Sethos II., Amenmes, Sipthah, Tausri, and Setinekht, few particulars are recorded; with the latter closed the long and not inglorious period of the 19th dynasty.

We now arrive at the epoch of the 20th dynasty, founded by Seethee II. about B.C. 1220, and illustrated by the genius of Rameses III., who subdued the refractory Ethiopians, and gained several sea-battles in the Mediterranean. It fell from its high place through some religious convulsion, and the priests of Amun Ra at Thebes were raised to the throne under the name of the Tanite kings, who ruled Egypt for about 130, or, as others say, 150 years. Then came

the Bubastite, or 22nd dynasty, supposed to have descended from foreign settlers in Bubastis, and to have been of Shemitic origin. Its most illustrious scion was Sheshonk—the Sesonchosis of Manetho—whose name is preserved in the propylon of the great temple at Karnak. He invaded Judah in the fifth year of the reign of Rehoboam with an army of 12,000 chariots, 6000 cavalry, and an innumerable host of infantry, captured Jerusalem, and returned to Egypt loaded with spoil. This remarkable event occurred between 989 and 959 B.C. Probably we may place it in 971 B.C.

The other kings of the Bubastite race have left no noteworthy memorials of their reigns.

Egypt declined in power and wealth under the 23rd or Tanite dynasty. The 24th consisted of one king only, Bocchoris, who made a vigorous effort to revive the decadent empire; but having been defeated and taken prisoner by the Ethiopian monarch, Sabaco, founder of the 25th dynasty, was burnt alive. This was a few years before the foundation of Rome (B.C. 753).

A period of intestine trouble, fomented apparently by foreign interference, and significant of the rapid decay of the empire, followed. The Ethiopians were expelled by the Assyrians, and the Delta seems to have split up into twelve independent states, historically famous as the Dodekarchy (B.C. 711–664). These were once more welded into a compact kingdom by Psammetichus I. (of the 26th dynasty), who availed himself of the arms of Greek mercenaries. His successor, Nekas, Neko, or Nekao II., lost

120,000 men in an attempt to cut a canal across the Isthmus of Suez. He defeated Josiah, king of Judah, and subdued Palestine; but was himself defeated about 607 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish.

Psammetichus II. (B.C. 595) restored the power of Egypt in Ethiopia; but his conquests were lost by the imbecility of his successor, Uaphra, or Hophra, who was eventually deposed by Amasis (B.C. 569), and strangled.

Amasis, or Aah-mes II., is a well-known historical character. He was leagued with the Greeks, wedded a Greek beauty, and was visited by Pythagoras and Solon. Herodotus describes the close alliance that existed between him and Polycrates, the king or "tyrant" of Samos, until the Egyptian monarch grew alarmed at his friend's unvarying prosperity. He advised him, in order to avert the anger of the gods, to throw away some costly possession; and Polycrates accordingly flung into the sea a valuable signet-ring of curious workmanship. On the following day, however, a fisherman presented the king with a singularly large fish that he had caught, and in its belly was discovered the ring! Thereupon Amasis withdrew from all relations with a man doomed to be so ominously fortunate.

It is more probable, however, as Mr. Grote suggests,* that this wary *thalassokrat*, or sea-king, abandoned the alliance of Egypt for that of Persia, when the latter power bade more highly for his support. When Cambyses invaded Egypt (525 B.C.),

* Grote, "History of Greece," iv. 323.

at the commencement of the reign of Psammenitus, he assisted him with a contingent of forty ships. The Egyptians were totally defeated at the great battle of Pelusium (B.C. 525), and their country became a province of the great Persian Empire. Cambyses afterwards marched into Ethiopia, lost his army amid the sands of the great desert, went mad with rage and shame, and plunged into an excess of cruelty and debauchery. Happy was it for Egypt when Darius I. came to the throne (B.C. 487), for he showed himself a prince of singular moderation and prudence. During the reigns of Xerxes (B.C. 484–460)—who vainly attempted the conquest of Greece and was crushed at Salamis—and Artaxerxes Longimanus (B.C. 460–413), Egypt twice, but unsuccessfully, revolted (B.C. 487–484 and B.C. 460–456). It was in the reign of the latter monarch that Herodotus visited Heliopolis and Thebes, and gathered up those precious historical notes which are of such value to the modern student. Egypt, though fallen from its former high estate, retained at this epoch much of its splendour in art and science—much of its intellectual pre-eminence; and the Greek traveller surveyed its wondrous monuments with the liveliest admiration. The people he found to be "extremely religious, and surpassing all men in the worship they rendered to the gods." The country, he added, contained more wonders than any other, and there was no region in all the world where one could see so many works which were admirable and beyond description.* He highly praises their sanitary condition; their domestic morality, for the

* "Herodotus," bk. ii. § 77, 91, 92.

Egyptians were "men of one wife;" their industry and originality. In a word, it is evident that he regarded them as a superior race.

The 27th or Persian dynasty was followed by the 28th, or Saite, consisting of Amyrtæus alone (B.C. 413), according to Manetho's record. This successful revolt against the Persians was maintained by the kings of the 29th and 30th dynasties, viz.:—

	B.C.
29th (MENDESIAN):—	
Nepherches	407
Achoris, or Acoreus	402
30th (SEBENNYTIC):—	
Nectanebo I.	387
Tachus, Ochus, or Teos *	361
Nectanebo II.	361

The latter sovereign was eventually compelled to fly into Ethiopia (B.C. 353), and Egypt again became a Persian province, which it remained till its conquest by Alexander the Great (B.C. 332).

Here the mission of Egypt in the great economy of the world terminates. The spirit of the old Egyptians was gone. The reigns of the Ptolemies were brilliant; but their civilization was Greek, not Egyptian. The ancient race died out. They had nourished the serpent that stung them; and on the ruins of their religion and literature was raised the superstructure of a theology and a philosophy which they themselves had inspired.

Alexander the Great marched through Egypt to the Oasis of Amun, founded Alexandria, ordered the improvement of its harbour, and contemplated many other splendid projects, which his death prevented

* He employed the Spartan Agesilaus to fight against the Persians.

from ripening into facts. His successor gave the government of the Land of the Nile into the hands of Ptolemy Lagus or Soter (B.C. 323), the first of the Greek kings of Egypt. The old Egyptian names now gave place to Greek appellations: *On* became Heliopolis; *This*, Abydos; *Thebes*, Diospolis Magna; *Pilak*, Philæ; *Petnieh*, Aphroditopolis; and *Khem* gave place to Ægyptus. In like manner, the abstract religion of the old Egyptians was dethroned, and a curious compound of the old and new, of old symbols with new ideas, of a half-understood philosophy with a poetical mythology, of ancient gods with modern attributes, reigned in its stead.

That science and learning, however, which could no longer flourish under the sway of the rude soldiers of degenerate Greece, found a home in the court of the Ptolemies, and Alexandria gathered within its walls the erudition of the age. Ptolemy Philadelphus founded the famous Alexandrian Library, encouraged the Septuagint version of the Scriptures, and patronized Manetho, the Egyptian historian. His successor, Euergetes, extended the southern frontier to Axum. Philopater, though constantly involved in hostilities, favoured the study of the arts and sciences. All the Ptolemies, in fact, were men of intellectual tastes and artistic sympathies.

The sixth of the race was Philometer, who was succeeded by the sanguinary Euergetes II., nicknamed Physcon, or the Big Bellied. He married his brother's sister and widow, Cleopatra—she was also his own sister—and on the same day murdered his infant nephew, who had at first been declared king.

He afterwards divorced Cleopatra, and wedded his niece. So atrocious were his cruelties, that his subjects named him, emphatically, Κακεργετες, "the malefactor," and rebelled against him, placing on the throne his divorced wife. He recovered his crown, however, after a three years' struggle, and reigned nine and thirty years. Though a Nero and a Tiberius in his blood-thirstiness, he cultivated learning, encouraged learned men, and was himself a "royal author." The dynasty closed with the witch-queen Cleopatra—

> "A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
> Brow-bound with burning gold;"

and after the defeat of Mark Antony at Actium, Egypt was incorporated as a Roman province.

The chronology of the Ptolemies is as follows:—

	B.C.
Ptolemy I. Lagus, or Soter	323
Ptolemy II. Philadelphus	285
Ptolemy III. Euergetes	267
Ptolemy IV. Eupater	222
Ptolemy V. Epiphanes	205
Ptolemy VI. Philometer	181
Ptolemy VII. Physcon, or Euergetes II.	146
Ptolemy VIII. Soter II., or Lathyrus	117–107
Ptolemy IX., or Alexander I.	107–90
[Ptolemy VIII. restored, B.C. 90–81.]	
Ptolemy X., or Alexander II.	81
Ptolemy XI., or Dionysius, or Auletes	80
Ptolemy XII. and Cleopatra II.	51
[Julius Cæsar invades Egypt, espouses the cause of Cleopatra, and defeats Ptolemy, who is drowned in the Nile, B.C. 46.]	
Ptolemy XIII. and Cleopatra II.	46
[Ptolemy is poisoned by Cleopatra, his sister, B.C. 43.]	
Cleopatra II.	43
[Death of Cleopatra, B.C. 30.]	

We must pass briefly over the further vicissitudes of Egypt. Vespasian visited Alexandria in 70 A.D.,

and Hadrian in 122 A.D. It was conquered by the great Queen Zenobia in 270, but soon regained by the Romans. In the reign of Constantine, Alexandria became the seat of the Arian heresy, and afterwards one of the principal patriarchates of the Greek Church. At the division of the empire, Egypt fell to the lot of the Eastern Cæsar (A.D. 395); but was conquered by the Arabs under Caliph Omar I.—partly through treachery and intestine commotion—in the 19th year of the Hegira, or 640 A.D. It was ruled in succession by various Arabian dynasties; and Saladin, one of the Ayoubites, fortified Cairo and built its citadel. In 1517 it fell into the hands of the Turks, who maintained their hold upon it, until Mohammed Ali (1807–1849) erected it into a hereditary pashalik for himself and family. Napoleon Bonaparte invaded it in 1798, and effected its subjugation; but the French were afterwards expelled by the Turks and British in 1801. French influence, of late years, has made rapid strides in Egypt, especially since the commencement of the Suez Canal, and as Great Britain is deeply interested in its independence—owing to its position on the highway to India—one may conjecture that the next great struggle between the two Western Powers will have Egypt for its cause and theatre.

Egypt, in its earlier ages, was a theocracy; its kings were its high-priests, and its palaces were temples. At the outset its religious creed was simple enough, was, in fact, a species of pantheism, and recognized all kinds of life as emanating from

the One Supreme Being. The various attributes of this mysterious God were afterwards ascribed to separate deities; a procedure, perhaps, originally adopted to render it more intelligible to the common people. Each god had his *put* or companion-deities; and each city or province its peculiar *put* or group, consisting of a parent-deity, a wife and sister, and son. Amun Ra, at Thebes, formed a *put* with Mu, Nit, and Khousu; Phtah, at Memphis, with the goddesses Pasht and Bast. As the female principle was dualized, there were not four but three gods in each group; and of these triads, the famous one of Osiris, Isis, and Horus was, in due time, worshipped by all Egypt.

There were three ranks or orders of gods: the first contained eight, as, Phtah, Ra, Shu, Seb, Osiris, Isis, Typhon, and Horus; the second, twelve; the third an unknown number, being personifications of natural objects, and the human senses, feelings, and passions.

Leaving out of consideration the One Supreme Divinity—the unnamed and indescribable—the other principal gods were: Osiris, Isis, and Horus, of whom we shall speak hereafter; Phtah, the Creative Intellect; Khnum; Kneph; Anouka; Athor; Ra, "the Sun;" Thoth, and Anubis.

The Egyptians believed in a future state, in the reward of the good and the punishment of the wicked, as well as in the transmigration of souls; confining the latter experience, however, to souls which were not sufficiently pure to pass at once into the celestial regions.

Let us now glance at the general aspect of the coun-

try. It is lacking in trees, in those groves and hanging woods which are the glory of an English landscape. The soil, however, where cultivated, yields a luxuriant harvest of many important and valuable plants: the sugar-cane, tobacco, cotton, and indigo. Among the reeds of Lake Menzaleh lingers the once-prized papyrus. Everywhere the face of the country is brightened with groves of the date-palm, whose fruit supplies the Arab with his staple food. The broad leaves of the Doum palm adorn the fields of southern Egypt, and the banks of the Nile bloom with the rich tamarisk and ever-green acacia. In the small but fertile valley of Faioum, myriads of roses load the air with fragrance; and every peasant's garden affords a crop of melons, cucumbers, leeks, and garlic.

In animal life Egypt is sufficiently rich, for she has numerous fine breeds of the horse, the ass, and the camel. The giraffe has been driven into the wilder districts by the progress of civilization; the hippopotamus is only found on the banks of the upper Nile; but the hyæna, the wild dog, and the jackal still prowl at night in the streets of the large towns; the ichneumon, the stork, the heron, the purple goose, and the sacred ibis, are almost as common now as in the days of Coptic prosperity. The crocodile, once the terror of the Nile, is seldom seen except in Upper Egypt.

Hot and dry is the climate of Egypt; a climate not favourable, perhaps, to the highest manifestations of man's intellectual and physical energy. But its extreme dryness eminently conduces to the preservation of natural substances from decay; and, in the

Egyptian caves and temples, the traveller looks astonished upon human bodies which, buried two or three thousand years ago, still seem fresh and uncorrupted. The curse of Egypt is the Khamsin—that fierce southern wind which blows in April and May, as its name indicates, for fifty days—hot as the blast of a furnace, shrivelling the skin, parching the lips, blinding the eyes with minute particles of sand, and depressing the spirit as with the omen of some unutterable evil.*

Several populous cities are still extant in Egypt, though of its past glories the principal memorials are the colossal monuments and remarkable ruins which, in such rare abundance, crowd the valley of the Nile. In *Lower Egypt* are situated Alexandria, Rosetta, and Damietta, at the respective mouths of the great river; and Aboukir, on the sea-coast, overlooking the bay where Nelson's glorious victory crushed out Napoleon's dream of an Oriental Empire. *Middle Egypt* possesses Cairo, or Grand Cairo—more properly, *Al-Kahira*, "the Victorious"—surrounded by a pleasant girdle of oranges, lemons, pomegranates, palms, and mimosas; Heliopolis, the ancient seat of Egyptian learning; Minreb, and Manfalut. In *Upper Egypt*, and among the richest scenery of the Nile valley—the *Thebaia* of yore—we find Siout, Girgeh, and Assouan; the latter, on the frontiers of Nubia, is the ancient Syene.

Egypt contains an estimated population of 5,225,000, including the tribes of the Desert. The majority are of Arabic descent, speak the Arabic

* Admiral Smyth, "The Mediterranean."

language, and profess the Mohammedan religion. They are chiefly *fellahs*, or peasantry, whose social condition is most miserable and degraded. Under the present *régime* there can be little hope of their improvement, or of the regeneration of that remarkable country which was once the cradle of civilization, the nursery of art, of science, and of literature.

THE NILE.

As the monuments and memorials of antiquity, to whose description this volume is dedicated, are all situated in the valley—and, indeed, on the banks—of the Nile, it seems desirable we should briefly sketch the course of that remarkable river. Apart from the phenomenon of its annual inundation, the mystery which so long hovered about its sources has always rendered it an object of wonder and curiosity to men; and, perhaps, the ancient Egyptians, who benefited by its rolling waters and witnessed with admiration its swelling floods, may be forgiven for having worshipped it as a god.

Everything in Egypt, says Miss Martineau—life itself, and all that it includes—depends on the state of the unintermitting conflict between the Nile and the Desert. The world has seen many struggles; but no other so pertinacious, so perdurable, and so sublime as the conflict of these two great powers. The Nile, ever young, because perpetually renewing its youth, appears to the inexperienced eye to have no chance, with its stripling force, against the great

CHART OF THE NILE.

old Goliath, the Desert, whose might has never relaxed, from the earliest days till now; but the giant has not conquered it. Now and then he has prevailed for a season, and the tremblers whose destiny hung on the event have cried out that all was over; but he has once more been driven back, and Nilus has risen up again, to do what we see him doing in the sculptures—bind up his water-plants about the throne of Egypt.*

From the beginning, continues Miss Martineau, the people of Egypt have had everything to hope from the river, nothing from the desert; much to fear from the desert, and little from the river. What their fear may reasonably be, any one may know who looks upon a hillocky expanse of sand, where the little jerboa burrows, and the hyæna prowls at night. Under these hillocks lie temples and palaces, and under the level sands a whole city! The enemy has come in from behind, and stifled and buried it. What is the hope of the people from the river, any one may witness who, at the regular season, sees the people grouped on the eminences, watching the advancing waters, and listening for the voice of the crier, or the boom of the cannon which is to tell the prospect or event of the inundation of the year. The Nile was naturally deified by the old inhabitants. It was a god to the mass; and at least one of the manifestations of Deity to the priestly class. As it was the immediate cause of all they had, and all they hoped for—the creative power regularly at work before their eyes, usually conquering, though occasionally

* Miss Martineau, "Eastern Life: Past and Present."

checked—it was to them the Good Power; and the Desert was the Evil one. Hence came a main part of their faith, embodied in the allegory of the burial of Osiris in the sacred stream, whence he rose, once a year, to scatter blessings over the earth.*

The sources of this wonderful river—so intimately bound up with the fortunes and creed of a great people—were long involved in obscurity. Until partly solved by the labours of Speke, Grant, and Sir Samuel Baker, the problem was one which stimulated the curiosity and foiled the ingenuity of geographers. It would be interesting both for writer and readers to tell the story of the Nile from the days of Herodotus to those of Baker, and to narrate the attempts of adventurous travellers to reach the mysterious source of its head waters. But these pages must be devoted to other themes, and we must content ourselves with a statement of *results*. Yet, even now, the question can hardly be regarded as settled. It is difficult to reconcile the statements of Speke and Baker, and both appear to depend somewhat too much on hearsay—on the reports of the natives—too little on their own observations.

On this point, however, we may quote Sir Samuel Baker's own words. "The Nile, cleared of its mystery," he says, "resolves itself into comparative simplicity. The actual basin of the Nile is included between about the 22° and 39° east longitude, and from 3° south to 18° north latitude. The drainage of that vast area is monopolized by the Egyptian river. The Victoria and Albert lakes, the two great

* Miss Martineau, "Eastern Life: Past and Present."

equatorial reservoirs, are the recipients of all affluents south of the equator; the Albert lake being the grand reservoir in which are concentrated the entire waters from the south, in addition to tributaries from the Blue Mountains, from the north of the equator. The Albert N'yanza is the great basin of the Nile: the distinction between that and the Victoria N'yanza is, that the Victoria is a reservoir receiving the eastern affluents, and it becomes a starting-point or the most elevated *source* at the point where the river issues from it at the Ripon Falls; the Albert is a reservoir not only receiving the western and southern affluents direct from the Blue Mountains, but it also receives the supply from the Victoria and from the entire equatorial Nile basin. The Nile, as it issues from the Albert N'yanza, is the *entire* Nile; prior to its birth from the Albert lake it is *not* the entire Nile." *

The stream discovered by Speke, and named by him the Somerset, is not the Nile at all, but a stream uniting the two great reservoirs of the main river. The true Nile seems to be the river which flows out of the Albert N'yanza at a point called Mayungo. †

Thus, it appears, that *one* of the sources of the Nile is the lake called by Speke *Victoria N'yanza*, which occupies the high ground at the base of the Mountains of the Moon, and is fed by their tributary streams and by the heavy equatorial rains. The so-called Somerset river flows out of it on the north, just above the equator; pouring its stream—150 yards wide—over a mass of igneous rocks, and form-

* Sir S. Baker, "The Albert N'yanza, Great Basin of the Nile," &c., i. 304, 305.

† Mayungo, in a straight line, is about 200 miles from Gondokoro.

ing the Ripon Falls, 12 feet high, lat. 0° 20′ north, long. 33° 30′ east. Thence it proceeds to the north-west, forms the Karuma Falls, the Murchison Falls, and joins the great lake recently explored by Sir Samuel Baker, and which he has named the *Albert N'yanza* (the Luta Nzige of Speke). Out of this basin, the White Nilė, as it is called—the Bahr-el-Abiad of the Arabs—flows in a north-westerly direction, and winds through a comparatively unknown country, until it reaches the confines of civilization at Gondokoro, which is 1900 feet above the sea level, (lat. 4° 55′ north, long. 31° 50′ east). This is one of the depôts of the ivory dealers, who occupy it about two months in the year. Over a level plain, with a comparatively inconsiderable descent, but with a remarkably sinuous course, it now proceeds first north-west, and then north-east, for some four or five hundred miles, and in lat. 9° 15′ north, long. 30° east, receives its first great affluent, the Bahr-el-Guzal, a slow and tranquil stream coming from the west. It then takes an easterly course for 80, and a southern for 30 miles, swollen by the tributary waters of the Giraffe and the Sobat; and afterwards strikes off due north, with a full and steady current, for nearly 500 miles, and a breadth varying from one to two miles, —as broad, that is, as the Thames at Cliffe, or the Clyde at Dunoon.

Thus it arrives at Khartoum, the capital of Nubia.*

But here another great river may be seen, which, for generations, was supposed to be *the* Nile, but is

* Malte Brun, "Géographie Universelle," (ed. Lavallée), art. Afrique, *in loco.*

now recognized as a minor branch, and distinguished by the name of Bahr-el-Azrek, the Blue Nile. It was this stream whose sources were explored by Bruce; but which, without the volume of waters contributed by the White Nile, would be absorbed in the burning deserts before it could reach Lower Egypt.

The Bahr-el-Azrek is formed by the junction of two streams; the Abai, which rises in Abyssinia, 50 miles from Lake Dembea, and 8700 feet above the sea; and the Blue River, whose sources are in the south, and which receives the Dender and the Shimfa.

From Khartoum the united Nile flows north for 60 miles—passing Halfaia and the famous ruins of Meroë—to its first rapid or so-called "cataract."* Thence it sweeps onward, past Shendy, to El Damer, where, in lat. 17° 45′ north, and long. 34° east, it is joined by the Atbara—also named the Bahr-el-Aswad, or Black River, an appellation fully deserved by the muddy colour of its waters.

Thence the "exulting and abounding river" traverses the rich and populous country of the Berbers, soon to enter on widely different scenery—a barren, sandy, desolate desert, where the ruins of ancient Egypt lie overwhelmed by the sandstones of centuries. Below the island of Mograt, it makes a curve to the south-westward, known as "the Great Bend," in which two cataracts occur. It then enters Nubia with a north-westerly course, forms another cataract, winds round to the north-east with a fifth (lat. 21° 40′ north), traverses a much narrower valley, and at Assouan,

* This is the "sixth" cataract from the river's *mouth*.

(lat. 24° 10′ north), on the Nubian frontier, descends into Egypt in its last cataract, or rapid. For they are rather *rapids* than *cataracts*, and caused by the encroachment of the rocks upon the channel of the river, which, dividing into several small streams, pours its waters through the craggy defiles with unwonted impetuosity. When the Nile is at its height, during the annual floods, these cataracts almost disappear, and may be securely passed by a steamer of light draught.

It should be noted that the Blue Nile has a broader and more copious channel than the White. In October, when the latter, at the point of junction, is only 483 yards across, the former is 768 yards. In Upper Egypt the breadth of the united river varies between 2000 and 3000 feet, or about the span of the Thames at Gravesend.

From Assouan to the sea the average fall of the Nile is only two inches in 1800 yards, and its average velocity does not exceed three miles an hour. About 120 miles from its mouth, it divides into two branches, which enclose between them a triangular area called the Delta (from the Greek letter Δ), and throw out on either hand numerous minor streams. The Delta measures along the Mediterranean coast 150 miles, and lies between lat. 30° 10′ and 31° 30′ north.

The total length of this great river—the creator and preserver of Egypt, which alone it has rescued from the desert, and which it still defends against the increasing attacks of the shifting sands of the wilderness—is about 3300 miles; and it should be noted

that, from its junction with the Atbara to its mouth, it does not receive a single tributary, though successfully contending with the sands of Nubia and a burning tropical sun. Its annual overflow, which for ages has occurred within a few hours of the same time, and to within a few inches of the same height, is one of the curiosities of physical geography. Upon it depends a people's happiness or misery, abundance or want. The cultivable soil of Egypt is indebted to the rising waters of the Nile for its irrigation. They are conducted in hundreds of little channels over the thirsty ground. Without them the valley would be a sandy waste. The waters, moreover, are loaded with a rich black mud, which, deposited upon the soil, proves a manure of extraordinary fertilizing properties.*

The rise of the Nile is due to the periodical rains of eastern Abyssinia and the countries further south, and on their greater or lesser quantity depends the height of the inundation. This height is carefully noted, as the extent of land subjected to irrigation, and the length of time during which it will remain under water, are regulated by it, and hence the occurrence of a good or bad harvest may be predicted with certainty. The ordinary rise at Cairo is about 25 to 27 feet; less is insufficient, and more is dangerous, frequently overwhelming whole villages. A rise of only 18 or 20 feet means—famine.

The land, thus strangely irrigated, will yield annually three crops; being first sown with wheat

* Owing to this deposit the soil of Egypt is annually increasing in elevation; but it is a curious fact that the bed of the river is also rising.

or barley; a second time, after the spring equinox, with cotton, millet, indigo, or some similar produce; and, thirdly, about the summer solstice, with millet or maize. The river begins to rise about the end of June, and attains its maximum towards the end of September, after which it gradually subsides. At the time of its greatest height, the country wears a very singular aspect. On the elevated bank you stand, as it were, between two seas; on one side rolls a swollen turbid flood of a blood-red hue; on the other lies an expanse of seemingly stagnant water, extending to the desert-boundary of the valley; the isolated villages, circled with groves of palm, being scattered over it like floating islands, and the *gise*, or dike, affording the sole circuitous intercommunication between them. When the waters subside, the valley is suddenly covered with a mantle of the richest green, and the face of the land smiles in the traveller's eyes with all the splendour of a new-created beauty.*

Bearing in his memory these few facts, the reader will come to understand the secret of the reverence with which the ancient Egyptian regarded the sacred river. The god Nilus, says Sir Gardner Wilkinson, is frequently represented with water-plants growing from his head, and binding up stalks or flowers indicative of the inundation. In all the cities on the banks of the river certain priests were exclusively appointed to the service of this deity; and if a corpse were found upon the sacred shore, the nearest town was obliged to embalm and bury it with every mark of honour.

* Eliot Warburton, "The Crescent and the Cross," p. 21, *et passim.*

The Nile, moreover, was intimately connected with Egyptian art. As its waters might not be polluted with dead bodies, the rocks of the desert were converted into tombs; and this circumstance suggested those *angular forms* which are so eminently characteristic of Egyptian architecture, and which have been adopted in every succeeding style. The ornaments of shaft and capital were borrowed from the river-plants; everywhere, in tomb and temple, one sees the graceful outline of the rose-coloured lotus. How far the river was the inspiration of their religious creed we have already hinted at. Its yearly overflow was pictured in their allegory of the burial of Osiris in the hallowed stream, and his resurrection, once a year, to scatter blessings over the earth. The Nile, too, suggested to them the river of death, across whose silent wave the dead were ferried, attended by the conductor of souls, the god Anubis. The Greeks afterwards availed themselves of this imagery, which, appropriate enough in Egypt, became singularly inappropriate in Hellas, and converted Anubis into Charon, and the Nile into the gloomy Styx. How many of our own ideas of the other world are borrowed from the Nilotic worship of the Egyptians! When we speak of the darkling stream which separates life from Eternity we are employing an Egyptian image, and, unknown to ourselves, perhaps, referring to the mysterious river of a mysterious land—the great and glorious Nile!

I.

Alexandria.

POMPEY'S PILLAR.

THE traveller's exploration of the Nile Valley begins at Alexandria, the famous sea-port founded by Alexander of Macedon, and a permanent memorial of his genius and political sagacity. It is a lively, dirty, semi-European city, with a vast trade, and a population of 70,000. Copt, Arab, Englishman, Armenian, Greek, Turk, and Frenchman—almost every nation under the sun, and every creed of every nation, have here their representatives. It is the meeting-point of East and West, of the old and the new civilizations, but with the Western elements predominating. There are camels and mules, palms, orange-trees, and bananas; but there are also dock-yards and arsenals, steam-engines, steam-cranes, factories, mills, and a score of other tangible indications that the old order has changed, and given way to the new. It is not a lovable town, however; and the principal object of the traveller who visits it is to get out of it again with all possible

speed. Of its magnificent buildings few memorials remain; and when he has duly gazed upon these, the European invariably hastens to commit himself and his fortunes to the custody of the river Nile. The most that can be said for Alexandria, says Mr. Kennard, is, that it is an inferior continental town; its streets peopled with Englishmen, Italians, and Greeks, whose wives dress in bonnets and Paris mantles, and go out shopping in the afternoon in one-horse clarences and pony-phaetons. "I was pleased," he adds, "to see a great many camels, and to observe that there were no trees but palms, no shrubs but prickly pears; but, on the whole, I thought the city eastern only in name, position on the map, and from the fact of its possessing Cleopatra's Needle and Pompey's Pillar."

Pompey's Pillar, as it is erroneously called, stands on a drear and solitary mound which overlooks the Lake Mareotis and the modern city;—a noble Corinthian column; the shaft, a fluted monolith of red granite, 73 feet high; total height, 98 feet 9 inches; circumference 29 feet 8 inches. Its annals are involved in some perplexity. The Arab historian Abdallatif, cited by Mr. Lane, represents it as the sole remaining pillar of four hundred which once embellished and enclosed the famous Serapéum, or Temple of Serapis—the Portico, where Aristotle expounded his abstruse doctrines—the Academy, which the Greek conqueror erected when he founded the city, and where the great library was placed which a baseless tradition affirms to have been burnt by order of the Caliph Omar.*

* Gibbon, "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," iii. 288.

The Serapéum was destroyed through the mistaken zeal of the patriarch Theophilus, who inflamed the wrath of the Christians against that superb sanctuary of the Pagan gods. The columns were overthrown,

POMPEY'S PILLAR.

and piled up, as a break-water, on the sea-shore; all save the one stately pillar—the loftiest of the four hundred—"the pillar of the colonnades," as the Arabs emphatically called it—which is still the cynosure of

European pilgrims. This was re-erected by Publius, prefect of Egypt, and a new capital and base provided for it, the whole being dedicated, as an inscription on the pedestal records, to the honour of the Emperor Diocletian, "the Invincible," as a memorial of the conquest of Alexandria (A.D. 296), and the suppression of the revolt instigated by the pretender Achilleus.

The summit was anciently crowned by a statue, or, perhaps, supported the cupola of the great temple.

The Pillar now stands in a place of desolation—very unlike the scene that surrounded it when, of old, the Nile teemed with gilded barges, and the Mediterranean was crowded with argosies, and the glowing light of the Pharos was the guiding-star of the commerce of the world. "You reach it," says Miss Martineau,* "through the dreariest of cemeteries, where all is of one dust-colour, even to the aloe which is fixed upon every grave. From the base, the view is curious to novices. Groups of Arabs are at work in the crumbling, whitish, hot soil, with files of soldiers keeping watch over them. To the south-east you obtain a fine view of Lake Mareotis, whose slender line of shore seems liable to be broken through by the first ripple of its waters. The space between it and the sea is one expanse of desolation. A strip of vegetation—some marsh, some field, and some grove, look well near the lake; and so do a little settlement on the canal, and a lateen sail gliding among the trees."

* Miss H. Martineau, "Eastern Life," i. 13, 14.

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLES.

"Obelisks graven with emblems of the time."
TENNYSON.

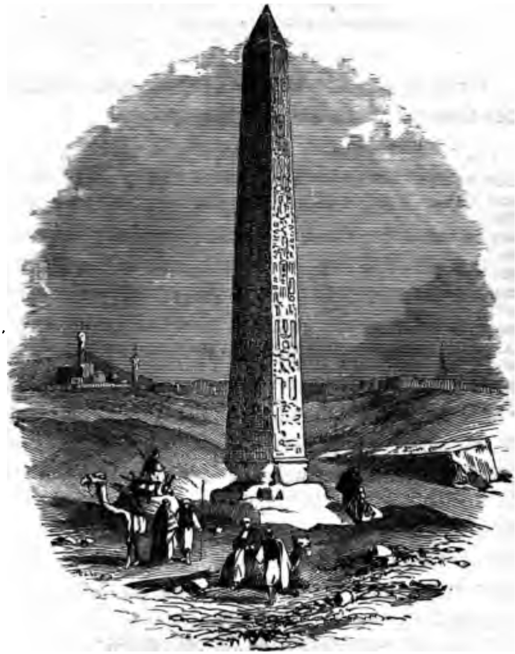
At the eastern extremity of Alexandria—that is, in a directly opposite direction to Diocletian's Pillar, and formerly in the vicinity of the palace, the museum, the library, the market, and the docks, all of which have perished—stood, in days of old, the Cæsarium, or Temple of Cæsar, whose site is now marked by two obelisks of red granite, one erect, the other prostrate on the sand.* These are the so-called Cleopatra's Needles, though in no wise connected with that "serpent of old Nile" whose fatal beauty enchanted the Roman triumvir, and cost him the sovereignty of the world. Long before the dynasty of which she was the last representative reigned over Egypt, they were raised at Heliopolis—the centre of Egyptian art and science—by Rameses III. They date, therefore, fully twelve centuries before the Christian era. Their removal to Alexandria was effected by Julius Cæsar to adorn his temple.

The obelisk that is still standing is 70 feet high. That which lies prone among the sand-heaps was presented to the British Government, in 1820, by Mohammed Ali; but, unhappily, considerations of expense have hitherto prevented its removal to England.

Though erected, as its hieroglyphical inscription records, in honour of Rameses III., its interest

* Madox, "Excursions in Egypt, the Holy Land, &c.," i. 99.

apparently centres in its fictitious connection with the dusky queen of Egypt. The traveller who gazes upon its tapering spire cannot but have his imagination touched by the name associated with it. He



CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.

recalls the strange wild history, so full of pathos in itself, and so exalted in poetical force by the genius of Shakspeare. He remembers the subtle spell of her cruel loveliness; the chance and change of her

wayward career; the pride of her luxurious splendour when she charmed "great Cæsar's soul;" the dark shadows that closed around her pitiful end—

> "The end, when she gained heart to see
> Those ways of death, wherein she trod,
> Goddess by god, with Antony."
>
> ALGERNON SWINBURNE.

What might not be made of an epic, which had the Queen of Egypt for its heroine? *

* This remarkable woman, the daughter of Ptolemy Auletes, was born in B.C. 69. She was married to her younger brother, Ptolemy, and through the assistance of Julius Cæsar ascended the throne of Egypt in B.C. 48. She afterwards visited Rome, where Cæsar accorded her a magnificent reception, and placed her statue in the temple which he had raised to Venus Genitrix. When the great dictator was slain, she hesitated for a time which side to espouse; but having been summoned to appear before Mark Antony at Tarsus, assumed the character of Venus Anadyomene, and so enchanted the triumvir that he could never again release himself from the spell. He resided with her at Alexandria, and at her instigation fought the great sea-fight of Actium, which completely ruined his cause. The remainder of her career is well known. She killed herself by causing an asp to bite her arm, in August 30 B.C.

> "I died a queen. The Roman soldier found
> Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
> A name for ever!—lying robed and crowned,
> Worthy a Roman spouse."
>
> TENNYSON.

II.

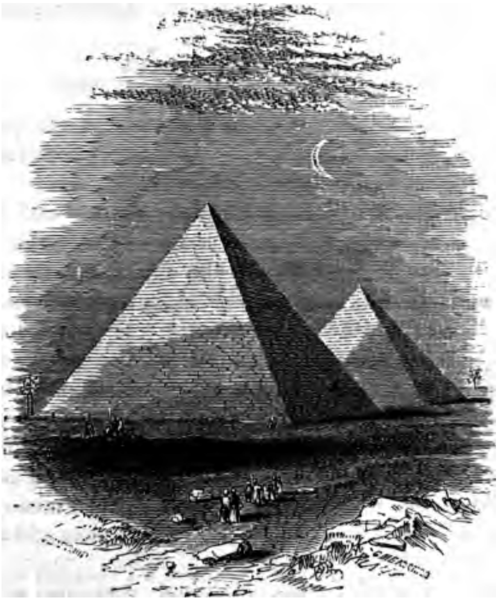
Cairo.

THE PYRAMIDS.

" On Egypt's burning plains,
By the Pyramids o'erswayed,
With fearful power the noonday reigns,
And the palm-trees yield no shade."
MRS. HEMANS.

LEAVING Alexandria, the traveller next betakes himself to Cairo. The river-voyage leads him through scenery which, if deficient in the beautiful, is not wanting in the picturesque. The villages of mud huts, embowered in palm groves, that throng the banks with their gleaming minarets and noisy crowds of fellahs; the vivid emerald green of the valley startlingly contrasted with the yellow boundary of the desert; the sandy shoals alive with wings, and gay with the plumage of the ibis and the pelican; the quaint native boats, with their bright-coloured passengers; the men paddling along on rafts of pottery or water-melons; the little busy cafés nestling in the shade of the far-spreading sycamores; the creaking *sakias*, or water-wheels, used for the purpose of irrigation; these, lit up by a

brilliant sky, and seen through the peculiarly transparent atmosphere of Egypt, form a picture of novel and not unattractive character.*



THE PYRAMIDS.

When about twenty or twenty-five miles from Cairo, the traveller obtains his first view of the Pyramids; clear and vivid masses, with "sharp blue shadows," standing in majestic solitariness in their expanse of sand. He afterwards sees them with greater fulness and distinctness, but never with more awe and surprise.

* W. H. Bartlett, "The Nile Boat," pp. 51, 52.

Seen thus at a distance, and with the cloudless Egyptian sky as their background, they apparently belong to the mysterious days of Anakim and giants; to an age of fable, and legend, and strange romance, when—

> "All the powers of nameless worlds,
> Vast sceptred phantoms, heroes, men, and beasts,"

inspired the imagination of the seer and the poet. One may well be forgiven for associating with them the wildest dreams!

Cairo itself, backed by its white citadel* and the yellow range of the Mokuttum hills—the "great Al Cairo," as Milton calls it—the city of Saladin and the Arabian Nights, is an ever-changing panorama of life and interest. It preserves a true Oriental air, and, as you examine its bazaars and ramble through its streets, you seem carried back, in body and spirit, to the days of Haroun Al-Raschid. Its streets are so narrow as scarcely to admit of two camels passing abreast; its bazaars glow with the richest productions of the looms of the East; its mosques and minarets are apparently innumerable; and its fountains fill the

* The citadel, which was built by Saladin, is a formidable stronghold, and planted in a commanding position. It contains a superb mosque, and the remains of Saladin's palace. Within its walls took place the massacre of the Mamelukes under circumstances of atrocious treachery. "Soon after Mahomet Ali was confirmed Pasha of Egypt by the Porte, he summoned the Mameluke Beys to a consultation on the war he meditated against the Wahabees of Arabia. As his son Toussoun had been invested with the dignity of Pasha of the second order, the occasion was one of festivity as well as of business. The Beys, therefore, mounted their finest horses and donned their most splendid apparel, forming the most superb cavalry in the world. After a very flattering welcome from the Pasha, they were invited to parade in the court of the citadel. They entered the fortification without suspicion; the portcullis fell behind the last of their glittering array; too late they perceived that their treacherous

air with an enduring freshness. The richly-carpeted shops are enclosed in front by a divan, and in the midst sits some venerable Turk or wealthy Arab, smoking a splendid narghileh of gold and silver, and surveying with complacent gaze his costly wares—jewellery from Paris, chibouques from Constantinople, tobacco from Latakia, dainty muslins from India, keen bright swords of "Damascene steel," and rustling silks from the land of the Celestials. Meanwhile, the streets are thronged in every part, and it is with difficulty the pedestrian escapes a rude jostle from the donkeys, which pass him every moment, laden with sand, and flour, and water; or with a happier burden, in the person of some beauty of the harem, closely veiled, and attended by watchful guards. Then comes the water-carrier, calling shrilly, "Moira, moira!" or a stately Turk makes his way to his favourite baths; or some tawny East Indian hero, returning to England, stalks imperturbably through the excited crowd; or one of the Pasha's guards dashes by, mounted on a richly caparisoned steed.

host had caught them in a trap, and they turned to effect their retreat. In vain! Wherever they looked, only blank, pitiless walls and barred windows confronted them. Yes, something more, when volley after volley poured from a thousand muskets upon their defenceless band. They met this sudden and terrible death as became their past traditions; some with arms crossed upon their mailed bosoms, and turbaned heads devoutly bowed in prayer; some with flashing swords and fierce curses, alike unavailing against their dastard and ruthless foe. All that chivalrous and splendid throng, save one, sank rapidly beneath the deadly fire into a red and writhing mass—that one was Emim Bey. He spurred his charger over a heap of his slaughtered comrades, and sprang upon the battlements. It was a dizzy height, but the next moment he was in the air—another, and he was disengaging himself from his crushed and dying horse amid a shower of bullets. He escaped, and found safety in the sanctuary of a mosque, and ultimately in the deserts of the Thebaid."—*The Crescent and the Cross*, chap. v.

The houses, like those of mediæval cities, consist of successive stories of latticed windows overlapping one another, as it were, to the topmost story; and the windows so contrived that the inmates can easily survey the passers-by, while none can obtain a glimpse of *them*. Over the doorway is generally a religious inscription. In the garden behind rises a tall and graceful palm-tree, whose emerald plumes droop over into the street.

The citadel, which, as we have already stated, dominates the whole city, is planted on a bold ridge of sandstone. Its walls are solid, and in some places from 50 to 100 feet high. It commands a view of wondrous extent and magnificence; including not only the carved domes and fantastic minarets of Cairo, but the sequestered valley with its tombs of the Memlook Sultans—the rich deep verdure of the distant Delta—the long mysterious line of the dusky Pyramids—the marge of the rocky Libyan Desert—the soft wanderings of the tranquil Nile—and everywhere a soil that has been swept by successive waves of revolution, from the days of Menes to those of Napoleon,—a soil that seems haunted by

"The shape and shadow of mystic things."

Cairo itself is modern; modern, that is, for Egypt, which conceals all its past pride in the dust of a hoar antiquity. It was founded, eastward of Fostat or Old Cairo, by Tooloon, a Moslem governor of Egypt, in 868; but removed still further eastward, to its present site, by El Moez, the leader of the Fatimites, in 923. It was enlarged, embellished, and

fortified by the illustrious Saladin, the Bayard of the Moslem chivalry, and besieged, but unsuccessfully, by the Crusaders in 1220. Such is its history. One visits it, not for its annals or associations, but for its living pictures of Orientalism, and because it lies within the shadow of the Pyramids.

Yes: the Pyramids. From one's boyhood the words possess a species of enchantment. Like the spells of the old necromancers, they invoke a host of spectres from the shadowy graves of the Past. They are probably more familiar to us, by book and picture, than half the architectural monuments of our own land. Those mighty masses seem to convey to us from afar a subtle impression of awe, majesty, and strength; and with them we insensibly associate I know not what ideas of divine mystery and wonder. They belong to the earliest ages of the human race,—to days before History began,—when the world's "gray forefathers" roamed at will over the boundless pastures, and the angels had hardly ceased to visit the daughters of men. Abraham will have gazed upon their giant forms, Joseph have reposed in their shadow. Generations have come and gone; dynasties have risen like stars, and, like stars, have sunk below the horizon; the arts and sciences of Egypt have transferred their glories to western empires; but still, on the edge of the broad and dreary desert, and still looking out upon the blown valley of the Nile, stand the giants of the Unknown Time, and seem to mock the men, and things, and littlenesses of To-day!

Who built them? What purpose were they intended to serve? The first question, through the

researches of Champollion, Vyse, and Lepsius, we can answer with tolerable accuracy; to the second no fully satisfactory reply has yet been given. We are told they were the granaries erected by Joseph; temples of Venus; ancient observatories; reservoirs for purifying the Nile waters; mausolea of the Egyptian kings; while Professor Piazzi Smyth has recently attempted to prove that the Great Pyramid was erected to preserve certain standard measures of capacity and dimension.* The most reasonable conclusion is that which General Howard Vyse arrived at—that they were the tombs of Egyptian monarchs who flourished from the 4th to the 12th dynasty.† They are solid mounds raised over sepulchral chambers, like the cromlechs of the Celtic tribes. Now, Death-in-Life was the great principle of the religion of the Egyptians. All life was spent in a steadfast and methodical preparation for death. The unseen world was their daily thought; the visible world of no regard, except as the porch or vestibule of the Temple of Eternity. Every man, if his need was not too great, began the preparation of his tomb early in life. He looked forward eagerly to joining the "great congregation" of those who had gone before. "The case of the kings," says Miss Martineau, "was strong indeed. Each one of them lived solitary; and it was only when he died that he would enter among his peers. He went from the solitude of the busy, peopled plain, to the sanctified society of the Valley of Death. To him, this was the great event to which he was looking

* Prof. Piazzi Smyth, "Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid."

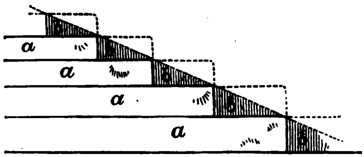
† The etymology of the word "Pyramid" is uncertain, but there can be little doubt it meant a tomb or sepulchre.

forward during the best years of his life; and he devoted his wealth, his thoughts, and the most sacred desires of his heart, to preparation for his promotion to the society of kings, and the presence of the gods. There, an abode would be prepared for him. On the walls of his tomb he attempted to paint the succession of mansions in the great heavenly house which he was to inhabit at last: but, meanwhile, he was to dwell, for a vast length of time, in the long home in the valley, where his peers were lying still (whether asleep or vigilant) all round about him." *

Thus, then, as soon as a king began to reign, he began the erection of his mausoleum. Gangs of labourers were brought together from all parts of the empire: in those days labour was cheap, and a king's command irresistible. A shaft of the size of the intended sarcophagus having been first excavated in the rock, at such an incline as permitted the sarcophagus to be readily lowered, then, at a suitable depth, a cell or chamber was hollowed out for its reception. Over this chamber was built up the pyramidal mass of masonry, of square blocks,—the mouth being left open. As long as the sovereign lived, this pyramid was increased in height and breadth, and, at his death, completed by facing or smoothing its exterior. This was done in the following manner: courses of long blocks were added to each step or gradation of the mass, and the whole cut down to an uniform surface, beginning from the apex.†

* Harriet Martineau, "Eastern Life," i. 325–327.
† Sir Gardner Wilkinson, "Modern Egypt and Thebes," *passim*.

It was long a matter of wonder how such immense masses of masonry were elevated to their respective



a, Original masonry. *b*, Additional work of exterior.

places, but the discovery of large circular apertures in many of the stones, seems to show that the Egyptians were assisted by some kind of machinery. Yet, even thus, our admiration must be freely given to the artisans who accomplished so much with means and appliances apparently of the simplest order. How great must have been the ingenuity—how supreme the perseverance—how vast the toil! Alas, for the hewers of wood and drawers of water, who were dragged from their far-off homes to perish, perhaps, at their incessant labour! Where did *they* sleep the last sleep, I wonder? What sepulchre enshrined *their* dust? Not for them the mighty pyramid and the historic memory: their meed was forgetfulness.

The stones made use of were either brought from the granite quarries of Syene, or, more often, quarried on the spot. The entrances were filled up with anxious care, and ingress to the last resting-place of the king prevented by barriers of solid stone.

Egypt contains seventy Pyramids, all between 29° and 30° north lat., the most remarkable being situated at Memphis, in the neighbourhood of Cairo, and all on the west bank of the Nile. Their sides face the

cardinal points, and their entrances are on the north. The three largest, or those of El-Ghizeh, are the best known and most celebrated.

The first, or *Great Pyramid*, was erected by Cheops, who flourished, according to different chronologists, at 3229, 3095, or 2123 B.C., and was the Chenebes or Chemmis of Diodorus, and the Suphis of Manetho. Its height was 480 feet 9 inches, and its base 756 feet square; that is, it occupied an area equal in extent to Lincoln's Inn Fields, or about twelve acres, with a mass of building higher than St. Paul's Cathedral. Its slope or angle was 51° 50′, but its external effect has been much injured by the spoliation of the exterior blocks for the erection of Cairo. The entrance is about 40 feet from the ground, and 4 feet high. The passage is on a considerable incline, 320 feet in length, and conducts to the mortuary chamber, excavated out of the solid rock, and measuring 46 feet by 27 feet, and 14 feet 6 inches in height. At the distance of 106 feet from the entrance it is closed up by a block of granite, and an upper passage proceeds from this point at an angle of 27°.* Climbing by a few steps into the second passage, you ascend to the entrance of the Great Gallery, from whence a horizontal passage leads into what is called the Queen's Chamber, which has a triangular roof, 20 feet 3 inches high, and a length of 17 feet by a breadth of 18 feet 9 inches. There is a niche in the east end, where the Arabs have broken the masonry in search of treasure; and Sir Gardner Wilkinson is of opinion that if the pit where the king's body was

* General Howard Vyse, "Observations on the Pyramids of Ghizeh."

deposited exists in any of these rooms, it should be looked for beneath this niche, which is nearly in the exact centre of the Pyramid.

Returning to the Great Gallery, we come, at its base, to the mouth of what is called the Well—a narrow funnel-shaped shaft leading down to the subterranean vault. As it is useless to descend thither, we continue our course along the gallery for 158 feet, arriving at a horizontal passage where four granite portcullises, descending through grooves, once arrested the steps of the intruder and guarded the repose of the dead. These obstacles, however, have been overcome, and you are now enabled to enter the principal chamber in the Pyramid—the King's Chamber—constructed entirely of red granite, and containing a sarcophagus of the same material, 7 feet 6½ inches long, 3 feet 3 inches broad, and 3 feet 5 inches high. We have called it a "sarcophagus," but later authorities are not in accord as to its uses, and Prof. Piazzi Smyth asserts that it was jealously preserved as a standard measure of capacity, of which the British quarter is the fourth part. The reasons which the Scotch astronomer advances in support of his opinion are, to say the least, *plausible.*

The King's Chamber measures 17 feet 1 inch by 34 feet 3 inches, and 19 feet 1 inch in height. It is ventilated by two small air-channels, or flues, about 9 inches square, which ascend to the north and south sides of the Pyramid. Above it, and accessible only by a narrow passage, is a small chamber, discovered by Mr. Davison, 3 feet 6 inches high; and above *this*, four other similar niches or chambers were explored

by General Vyse. Here was found the cartouche containing the name of the founder Shufu, or Cheops.

Shufu, and his brother Num-Shufu (or Sensuphis), reigned in part together, and were the joint builders of the Great Pyramid. Their reigns extended over 66 years. During this long period, upwards of 100,000 men, relieved every three months, were employed upon it.*

The second Pyramid, generally attributed, though on no hieroglyphical authority, to Cephrenes (perhaps Shaf-ra, or Sephres, of the 5th dynasty), is of later date, and of ruder construction than that of Cheops. It stands on higher ground, and consequently has an appearance of greater height. It is distinguished by retaining a portion of that outer and smoother casing which all the Pyramids once possessed. In its interior arrangements it differs from the Great Pyramid, the sarcophagus of the founder being sunk in the floor. It appears to have been broken into by the Calif Alaziz Othman Ben-Yousouf, 1196 A.D., but the honour of throwing it open to modern explorations is due to the enterprise of Belzoni.

The account which that intrepid and sagacious traveller furnishes of his explorations, may even now be perused with interest by the reader. Having discovered an entrance, he caused his hired troop of Arabs to clear away the rubbish about it, and cut through the massive stones of the Pyramid, until admission was obtained into the vault or passage,

* Herodotus, bk. ii. 123, 124.

which proved to be 4 feet high, 3 feet 6 inches wide, formed of granite, and descending 104 feet towards the centre, at an angle of 26°. Further labour conducted him to a portcullis, a fixed block of stone, which seemed to render impossible his progress into the interior. It stared him in the face as a *ne plus ultra*, putting an end to all his projects. But enthusiasm never believes in the impracticable. A closer inspection of the stone revealed that at the bottom it was raised about eight inches from the ground, while at the top a groove had been opened in the wall to admit of its elevation when required. With great toil it was lifted up into this recess, and a passage made high enough for a man to pass underneath. Belzoni, with a thrill of triumph, pressed forward, and, after thirty days of wonderful perseverance, was rewarded by finding himself in the way to the central chamber of the second Pyramid.

As it was his desire to reach the centre, he continued his advance along a tunnel excavated in the solid rock, 6 feet in height, and 6 feet 6 inches broad. He then arrived at a large chamber, where he paused to collect his scattered thoughts. Where was he? What was the object of the cell or apartment in which he found himself? "Whatever it might be," he says, "I certainly considered myself in the centre of that Pyramid which, from time immemorial, had been the subject of the obscure conjectures of many hundred travellers, both ancient and modern. My torch, formed of a few wax candles, gave but a faint light; I could, however, clearly distinguish the principal objects. I naturally turned

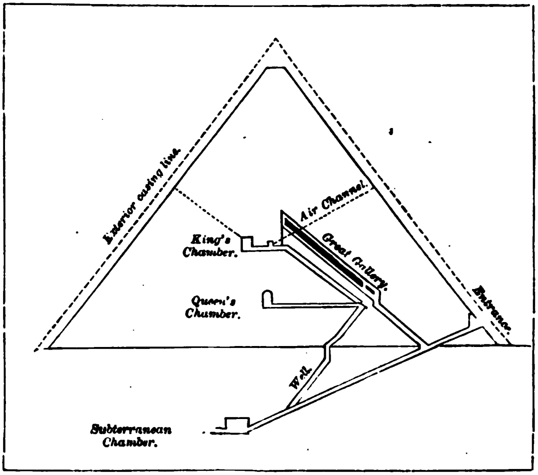
my eyes to the west end of the chamber, looking for the sarcophagus, which I strongly expected to see in the same situation as that in the first Pyramid; but I was disappointed when I saw nothing there. The chamber has a pointed or sloping ceiling, and many of the stones had been removed from their places, evidently by some one in search of treasure. On my advancing towards the west end, I was agreeably surprised to find that there was a sarcophagus buried on a level with the floor."

This sarcophagus is 8 feet long, 3 feet 6 inches wide, and 3 feet 2 inches deep in the inside. It is manufactured of the finest granite, but does not exhibit a single hieroglyph. The fragments of bone found in the interior belonged to an animal of the bovine species, and have been generally supposed to be the remains of the sacred bull—the type of the god Apis—so highly venerated by the Egyptians. The chamber is 46 feet in length, 16 feet 3 inches in width, and 23 feet 6 inches in height.

Such were the most important discoveries which rewarded Belzoni's energy. He also found a well or shaft, as in the Pyramid of Cheops, and from thence a passage running towards the north at an angle of 26°. It continued in this direction for 48½ feet, and then opened upon a horizontal passage 35 feet long. Off this gallery turns an avenue or corridor 22 feet long, with a descent of 26° towards the west, which leads into a chamber with a pointed roof, 32 feet long, 9 feet 9 inches wide, and 8 feet 6 inches high.*

* Belzoni, "Researches and Operations in Egypt and Nubia," i. 410, *et seq.*

Kephren, according to Manetho, reigned sixty-six years.



GREAT PYRAMID OF GHIZEH.

The third Pyramid, smaller than the others, but admirably constructed, was built by Men-ka-ré or Mycerinus, who reigned sixty-three years. It is only 218 feet high, by 354 feet 6 inches square. It has two sepulchral chambers, excavated out of the solid rock. The lower, which held a rectangular sarcophagus of whinstone, has a pointed roof, cut like an arch inside; but the cedar coffin, and the mummy belonging to it, &c., have been removed to the upper apartment by some unknown spoliator. The débris of the coffin, and the remains of the mummy, were afterwards conveyed to England, where, in the

British Museum, they still attract the curious notice of thousands. The stone sarcophagus was unfortunately lost off Carthagena, by the sinking of the vessel to which it had been intrusted.

Six other Pyramids of inferior dimensions are situated at Ghizeh; one at Abou-Ruweysh, five miles north-west, in a ruined condition, built by Venephes, of the first dynasty; another decayed memorial, built of limestone, stands at Zowyet El Arrian; and another, supposed to have been built by King User-en-Ra, or Busiris, at Rugar. There are three Pyramids at Abooseer, one connected with King Shura, and another with a monarch of the third dynasty. Eleven are extant at Sakkara; five at Dashour—the northernmost of which is believed to have been erected by the King Asychis of Herodotus.* Others are at Biahmo, at Meydoon, and at Illahoon, and some small ones of brick, belonging to kings of the eleventh dynasty, at the Drah Aboo Negger, near Thebes. Wherever found, it has been ascertained that none were erected later than the twelfth dynasty of kings, and almost all of them may be described as forming a part of the great Necropolis of Memphis.

We may sum up our account of the Pyramids with the just reflections of the Arab historian Abdallatif, who says :—

* This king boasted greatly of his erection, perhaps because it was of brick. "Wishing," says Herodotus, "to surpass all the kings who had reigned in Egypt before him, he left for a monument a Pyramid of brick, with this inscription cut upon a stone : 'Despise me not in comparing me with the Pyramids of stone. I am as much above them as is Amun above all other gods: for I have been built of bricks made with the mud brought up from the bottom of the lake.' This is the most notable thing that Asychis did."—*Herodotus*, bk. ii. § 136.

"The form which has been adopted in the construction of the Pyramids, and the solidity which has been given them, are well worthy of admiration. It is to their form that they owe the advantage of having resisted the hostility of centuries: or rather, it seems as if it were Time which has resisted the opposition of these eternal edifices. Indeed, when we meditate deeply on the construction of the Pyramids, we are compelled to acknowledge that men of the greatest genius have here employed in combination their best powers; and that the subtlest minds have exhausted their deepest resources; that the most enlightened souls have exercised in profusion all the abilities that they possessed which could be applied to these constructions; and that the wisest theory of geometry has employed all its means to produce these wonders, as the last point of astonishment which it was possible to reach. Thus we may say that these edifices speak to us now of those who reared them, teach us their history, open to us in an intelligible manner the progress which they had made in the sciences, and the excellence of their abilities—in a word, they put us in possession of the life and action of the men of those days." *

All things dread Time, says the proverb, but Time dreads the Pyramids.†

* Abdallatif, "Relation de l'Egypte," livre i., c. 4.

† The youthful student may be referred, for fuller information, to General Howard Vyse's "Observations on the Pyramids of Ghizeh;" Gliddon's "Egyptian Archæology;" and Bunsen, "Egypt's Place in Universal History." We may add that Sir G. Cornewall Lewis seems to intimate that none of the Pyramids were anterior to the building of Solomon's Temple (1012 B.C.); while astronomical dates would certainly place the erection of the Great Pyramid eleven centuries earlier, or in 2123 B.C. At that time the star γ Draconis was the pole-star,

THE SPHINX.

"Thy form stupendous here the gods have placed,
Sparing each spot of harvest-bearing land,
And with this mighty work of art have graced
A rocky isle, encumbered once with sand,
And near the Pyramids have bid thee stand."
ARRIAN—*Translated by Dr. Young.*

In front of the Pyramids—a solemn and majestic apparition, rising, Pharos-like, above the surging sands which gather around, like the billows of a petrified sea—the traveller beholds the Sphinx, mutely tranquil and immovably serene, as in the days when religious processions marched up between its colossal paws to the temple which it sheltered by

and passed the lower meridian at Ghizeh at an altitude of 26° or 27°—the inclination at which the straight passages on the north side of the Great Pyramid descend.

The Pyramids have their legends: of a lighter character, in truth, than would seem to become such grave and hoary piles. Of one, the erection is ascribed to a princess of the Pharaonic race. Her father taunted her one day with the uselessness of the personal charms she possessed in no ordinary measure, and was not unnaturally vain of. She vowed, in her anger, that she would raise, by the power of her beauty, a monument as lasting and as grand as any that her ancestors had erected by the power of their armies. The number of her lovers, says Warburton, was thereupon increased by all who were content to sacrifice their fortune for her smiles. Her memorial, a massive Pyramid, rose rapidly: to prove their devotion, her lovers ruined themselves; but the fair architect secured the renown she desired, and was afterwards enshrined in Sappho's tender song. Another legend relates that a fair Greek girl, named Rhodope, was once bathing in the Nile, while the very birds of the air hovered round her, entranced in admiration of her loveliness. An eagle, more rapturous than the rest, as might be expected of the bird of Jove, flew away with one of her dainty pantoufles in its talons; but, startled by a sudden outburst of Egyptian loyalty, let fall the precious souvenir at the feet of Pharaoh, who was holding his court in the open air. Our reader's imagination will supply the remainder of the story. Pharaoh commanded an instant search for the owner of so small a slipper. She was found; she was wooed; she was won; and within a Pyramid erected to her glory now lies her dust.—*Eliot Warburton, "The Crescent and the Cross,"* chap. xvi.

its all-embracing bosom. It is, perhaps, the most wonderful of the Egyptian monuments; and the traveller never wearies of gazing upon the "stony calm of its attitude," the weird beauty of its repose, the unutterable meaning of its eloquent countenance. The Arabs expressively name it Aboolhōl, "the father of terror," or "immensity." Bartlett compares it to "some mysterious pre-Adamite monarch," or "to one of those gigantic genii of Arabian fiction which make their abode in the desolate places of the earth." Miss Martineau speaks of its "long, well-opened eyes—eyes which have gazed unwinking into vacancy, while mighty Pharaohs, and Hebrew lawgivers, and Persian princes, and Greek philosophers, and Antony with Cleopatra by his side, and Christian anchorites, and Arab warriors, and European men of science, have been brought hither in succession by the unpausing ages to look up into those eyes—so full of meaning, though so fixed." But the eloquent author of "Eōthen" has expressed the admiration which it awakens in every thoughtful observer with yet greater faithfulness:—

"Comely the creature is," he says,* "but the comeliness is not of this world; the once-worshipped beast is a deformity and a monster to this generation: and yet you can see that those lips, so thick and heavy, were fashioned according to some ancient mould of beauty—some mould of beauty now forgotten—forgotten because that Greece drew forth Cytherea from the flashing foam of the Ægean, and in her image created new forms of beauty, and made

* A. W. Kinglake, "Eōthen: or, Traces of Eastern Travel."

THE SPHINX.

it a law among men, that the short and proudly-wreathed lip should stand for the sign and main condition of loveliness through all generations to come. Yet still there lives on the race of those who were beautiful in the fashion of the elder world; and Christian girls of Coptic blood will look on you with the sad, serious gaze, and kiss your charitable hand with the big pouting lips, of the very Sphinx.

"Laugh and mock, if you will, at the worship of stone idols; but mark ye this, ye breakers of images, that in one regard the stone idol bears awful semblance of Deity—unchangefulness in the midst of change—the same seeming will and intent, for ever and ever inexorable! Upon ancient dynasties of Ethiopian and Egyptian kings; upon Greek and Roman, upon Arab and Ottoman, conquerors; upon Napoleon dreaming of an Eastern Empire; upon battle and pestilence; upon the ceaseless misery of the Egyptian race; upon keen-eyed travellers, Herodotus yesterday, and Warburton to-day;—upon all and more this unworldly Sphinx has watched, and watched like a Providence with the same earnest eyes, and the same sad, tranquil mien. And we, we shall die, and Islam wither away; and the Englishman, straining far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile, and sit in the seats of the Faithful; and still that sleepless rock will lie watching and watching the works of the new busy race, with those same sad, earnest eyes, and the same tranquil mien everlasting. You dare not mock at the Sphinx."

The colossal figure is hewn out of the rock, except-

ing the fore-paws, which are built of squared stone—an enormous couchant monster, with gigantic arms, between which formerly nestled a miniature temple with a platform, and flights of steps for approaching it. In the old time, its head bore either the royal helmet or the ram's horns. According to Pliny, it measured, from the belly to the highest part of the head, 63 feet; its length was 143 feet;* and the circumference of its head round the colossal brows, 102 feet. Over the temple and altar of sacrifice the grand head of this tutelary deity towered from an altitude of 60 feet. The granite tablet above the altar is still visible, but the temple lies buried beneath the drifted sand.

Sphinx is a Greek word, meaning "the Strangler;" and in Egypt is only applied to a symbolical monster, having the body of a lion, and a human or animal head. When complete, with two wings attached to the sides, it is of Babylonian or Assyrian origin. In the Egyptian hieroglyphics it bears the name of *Neb*, or Lord, and *Akar*, or Intelligence; so that it evidently typified the Mystery of Intellectual Force.

That which we have just been examining is the largest in Egypt. Caviglia, who carefully explored it in 1816, ascertained from three hieroglyphical tablets in its naos, or temple, that the said temple was dedicated to it—under the name of Haremakhu, or "Sun on the Horizon"—by Thothmes III. and Rameses II. Before the altar, which was, apparently, placed there by the Romans, stretched a paved esplanade, or

* The exact dimensions are: 172 ft. 6 in. long, and 56 ft. high.

dromos, repaired in the reigns of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, May 10, 160 A.D. Various votive inscriptions were discovered; and, especially, on the second digit of the left claw, the Greek pentameters, by Arrian, which have supplied the motto to this chapter.

Some further particulars were obtained by M. Mariette, in 1852, who caused the vicinity to be carefully excavated. He laid open a peripolos, or outer wall, designed to protect it from the ever-shifting sands; and ascertained that only the head of the Sphinx was sculptured. To the south he found a dromos leading to a temple built, in the era of the fourth dynasty, of huge blocks of red granite and alabaster. Here, in the midst of the great chamber, were found seven statues—five mutilated, and two entire—of the monarch Kephren, or Shaf-ra, which were very finely executed. His researches proved that the Sphinx was contemporary, in point of erection, with the Pyramids.

A short distance to the south-east of these imposing monuments of an extinct civilization, and on the bank of the Nile, a few mounds—a few shapeless ruins and mummy-pits—mark the site of the ancient *Memphis.**

MEMPHIS! It may be that the word awakens no curiosity in the reader's mind, though if we did but name to him Florence, or Rome, or Athens, he would flush with the joy of a thousand glorious recollec-

* "Encyclopædia Metropolitana," art. Egypt; Mrs. Romer, "Temples and Tombs of Egypt," i. 366–368.

tions. Yet, long before Athens or Rome had a being, Memphis was the seat of a splendid court, the home of the highest philosophy, the cradle of the loftiest science. It was here the Persian king Cambyses received the gorgeous embassies that came from the far lands of Asia,—

> "From India and the golden Chersonese,
> And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
> Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed."

At that time, including its citadel and suburbs, it had a circuit of sixteen miles. Hither came the great Macedonian warrior and statesman, Alexander; and having visited the Apeum in solemn procession, floated down the Nile in a golden galley to the Canopic mouth. Even under the Ptolemies it was still a rich and prosperous city, and during the eras of the Roman and Byzantine Emperors, ranked second in importance to Alexandria; nor did it decline or decay until after its capture by Amrou the Arab. Then, indeed, with all the pomp and glory of forty centuries, it sank down into the dust: and what now survives of the city of Sesostris?

The ruins of its great temple were discovered by M. Mariette in 1850–51. This was the magnificent Serapéum, built by the Greeks on the site of that ancient "abode of Osor-hapi," or the "Osiris-Apis;" which the Egyptians had for ages regarded with peculiar reverence. It was approached from the city by an avenue of sphinxes—which, even in the time of Strabo, was partially buried in the sands—and consisted of four temples, respectively dedicated to Serapis, Astarte, Anubis, and Imouthos (or Escula-

pius). Close at hand stood the *Apeum*, or sanctuary of the sacred bull, where he was carefully tended, as well as the cow from which he had sprung. As each bull died, his mummy was stored away in one of the sepulchral corridors that extended underground for a considerable distance; and in which were preserved the remains of all the bulls from the reign of Amenophis III. (about B.C. 1400). The year of the king's reign in which he was born, when set up in the place of honour in the Apeum, and when interred in his subterranean sepulchre, were recorded on a tombstone or monumental tablet over his remains; and as these tablets range from the 19th dynasty to the epoch of Ptolemy II. (Euergetes), in 177 B.C., their chronological value is very great. The votive and sepulchral tablets numbered about twelve hundred, but the most important have been removed to the Louvre at Paris.* The priesthood of the Serapéum formed a peculiar order, living wholly within the confines of the temple, and supported by the oblations of the devout.

The mummies are arranged in two principal galleries, of which the more ancient is also the smaller; the second, in point of time, was begun in the 53rd year of Psammetichus I., and contain some magnificent granite sarcophagi. The other corridors are of inferior character, and their monuments and decorations display no artistic merit.

The Temple of Osiris-Apis, or Osor-apis—that is, the "Osirified" or "dead Apis"—was called by the Greeks the Serapéum, simply because they identified the Egyptian god with the deity Serapis, whose

* Mariette, "Serapéum de Memphis" (4to, Paris, 1856).

image and worship they translated from Sinope in Pontus to Alexandria, in consequence of a vision of Ptolemy I. (Soter.) This new deity found great favour in the Greek cities founded in Egypt, and forty-two temples were raised to his honour. The three most famous were those of Alexandria, Canopus, and Memphis. The Egyptian Apis, or divine bull, was worshipped as a symbol of Osiris. He was attended by a retinue of priests, and sacrifices of red oxen were offered to him. All his changes of appetite, his movements, and choice of places were watched as oracular. He was not allowed to live longer than twenty-five years. If he died a natural death before that age, his body was embalmed as a mummy, and interred in the subterranean tombs. Otherwise, he was secretly put to death, and buried by the priests in a sacred well. A new animal was then sought for. He was obliged to be marked with a white square on his forehead, an eagle on his back, and a knot like a cantharus under his tongue. When found, he was conveyed with great pomp to Nilopolis, where he remained for forty days, attended by naked women, and was then removed to Memphis.*

* After the defeat of the Persian army in the Libyan desert, Cambyses returned to this city (B.C. 524), to find its inhabitants rejoicing at the discovery of a calf marked with the mystic characters which declared it to be the divine bull. Supposing the public joy to be over his own defeat, Cambyses summoned the magistrates before him. They endeavoured to pacify him by relating the discovery of Apis, but were immediately condemned to death as liars. He then ordered Apis and his priests to be brought into his presence; "he would soon know," he said, "whether a tame god had really come to dwell in Egypt." Drawing his dagger, he stabbed the calf in the thigh, and sentenced the priests to be scourged. All his subsequent excesses and disasters were supposed by the Egyptians to be the penalty which the gods inflicted for this sacrilegious act.

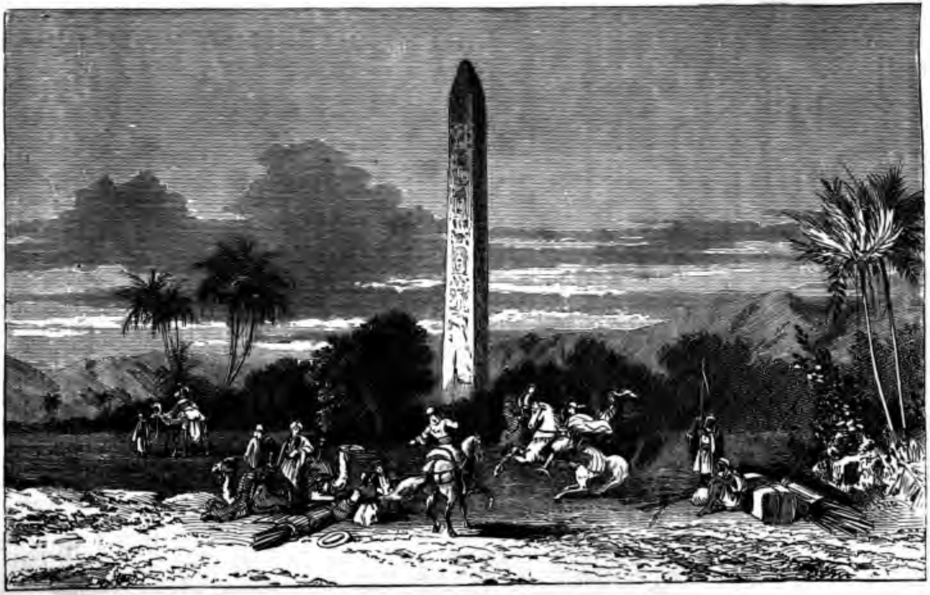
III.

Heliopolis.

THE OBELISK.

...... "An imperial city stood,
With towers and temples proudly elevate."
MILTON.

"A CIRCUIT of mounds indicates where the remains of the city lie." But what city? HELIOPOLIS,—the sanctuary of the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians; the Egyptian Oxford; a cluster of temples and colleges, where the priests taught the mysteries of their ancient faith. It stood formerly on an artificial elevation, overlooking lakes which were supplied by conduits from the Nile. Here Joseph was married to the beautiful Asenath. Here Moses studied the legislation of Egypt, and prepared himself to undertake the sublime mission of liberating his countrymen. Here, in a period of darkness and shadow, Jeremiah wrote his Lamentations over their sad decay. And here Eudoxus and Plato resided for thirteen years, and the latter learned that great doctrine of the immortality of the soul which he afterwards enshrined in glorious lan-



THE OBELISK.

guage in the *Phædon.* Here grew the celebrated balm of Gilead which the Queen of Sheba presented to Solomon.* And here, if we may believe an old tradition, came Joseph and Mary, with the infant Jesus, when they fled from the cruel wrath of Herod. The natives show you the tree—a venerable sycamore—under which the Holy Family reposed. Unfortunately, the tree is not above eight centuries old.

Of old-world Egypt, Heliopolis was the sacred city—the centre of its religious life—the source from whence flowed the higher impulses of its civilization. And now a circuit of mounds indicates where the remains of the city lie. It is this that renders Egyptian travel so mournfully impressive, for everywhere one sees the most eloquent commentaries on man's ambition, the most striking illustrations of the mutability of human things.

The sole relic of the once brilliant Heliopolis is its Obelisk, springing from the midst of a clump of date and acacia trees—a fellow to the twin obelisks removed from hence to Alexandria, and figuring there as Cleopatra's Needles. It is about 67 feet high, a single block of red Syene granite, and bears the name of Osirtesen I., the great king of the 12th dynasty. The base is buried several feet in earth, gradually accumulated after the various overflows of the river, which now pours into the area, though in ancient times it was considerably below the city's level.

Osirtesen I. reigned over both Upper and Lower Egypt. His name is conspicuously famous in Theban

* Eliot Warburton, "The Crescent and the Cross," chap. v.

annals. He built the older portion of the Temple of Karnak.

We bid adieu to Heliopolis with mournful memories crowding upon our brain—memories of bygone splendour and vanished pomp, of a lore and a creed which survive only in half-understood symbols and ruined monuments; yet with emotions of hope and joy: for we know that we possess a broader, a more genial, and a purer faith: and we feel in our heart of hearts, that whatever passes away—whatever sinks into oblivion—the world still presses forward in the great path of human progress; that nothing is wholly lost; that the wisdom of Egypt was inferior in depth, and scope, and fulness to the wisdom of Greece, as was that to the wisdom of Modern Europe; and that so, step by step, man, the heir of the ages, advances towards the consummation of his destiny in a regenerated and redeemed Earth! It is thus that the divine drama of civilization approaches its last act, its last scene. Egypt—Greece—Rome—Modern Europe—still westward flows the mighty river. The sun of man's fortunes rose in the East, and, preparatory to a new and more glorious rising, shall it not go down in the West?

> "Westward the course of empire takes its way,
> The four first acts already past,
> A fifth shall close the drama with the day—
> Time's noblest offspring is his last."
>
> BISHOP BERKELEY.

Some such reflection may serve to cheer the traveller as he views the tombs and temples that crowd the Valley of the Nile.

IV.

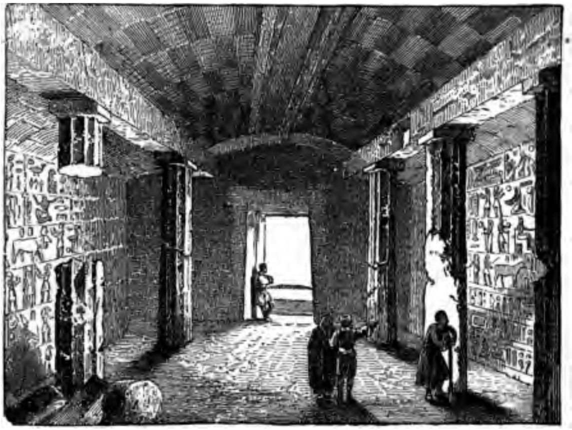
Beni-Hassan.

THE TOMBS.

> "Monarchs—the powerful and the strong—
> Famous in history and in song
> Of olden time."
>
> LONGFELLOW.

AFTER our excursion to the Pyramids and Heliopolis we once more return to Cairo, and, embarking in our dahabieh, resume our voyage up the Nile. Passing through the narrow channel which separates the island of Rhoda from Old Cairo, we emerge upon the full broad river, rolling its waters between green groves of palm. Yonder, across the level valley, loom the blue masses of the Pyramids, stretching far away to the site of ancient Memphis; and in the distance a flood of yellow light rests upon the sands of the Libyan Desert. We pass, successively, the Pyramids of Sakkara and Dashour, and in due time heave in sight of the groves and minarets of Beni-souef, the first considerable town on the river's western bank. From thence the traveller may visit Lake Mœris and the

EXTERIOR.



INTERIOR

BENI-HASSAN—THE TOMBS.

fertile district of the Faioum. Leaving behind its palms, with their rich clusters of golden dates, and the fluttering bowers of acacia, we move onward through ranges of barren cliffs, the offshoots of the Arabian and Libyan chains of mountains, which rise into a bold precipitous mass in the Gebel e Tayr, or "Mountain of the Birds,"—so called from the numerous water-fowl which frequent its craggy ledges. Yonder little gleaming town, encircled in bloomy date-groves, is Minyeh; and the next point of interest is Beni-hassan, where we land to explore its celebrated Tombs, situated high up in a hollow of the hills, whose rocks have been excavated to furnish the dead with resting-places.

These tombs are thirty in number, and are unique; unique on account of their antiquity, their architecture, and their representations of Egyptian manners and customs.*

Except the Pyramids, they are the oldest known monuments in Egypt, and many of them must have received their tenants before Joseph rose into Pharaoh's favour—a thousand years, perhaps, before Joseph was born. One tomb is of peculiar interest. It bears date in the early time of Osirtesen I., and consists of an arched cavern, whose walls are everywhere covered with pictorial language. It has a vaulted portico, with two shapely pillars of the kind which the Greeks afterwards called Doric. Throughout its chambers its basement is painted a deep red; and on this basement, as well as on the architraves,

* Sir Gardner Wilkinson, "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians."

the hieroglyphics are green; the general effect commending itself to the spectator's eye. The central avenue has a low coved ceiling, and at its extremity a large niche or recess. It is divided from the aisle on either hand by a row of columns, resembling those of the portico.

In this painted chamber occurs a remarkable procession, which some travellers have erroneously supposed to represent the arrival of Joseph's brethren in Egypt. But apart from other evidence, which tends to show that the tomb was closed ten centuries before that event, there is enough in the procession itself to prove that it has no connection with Hebrew history.

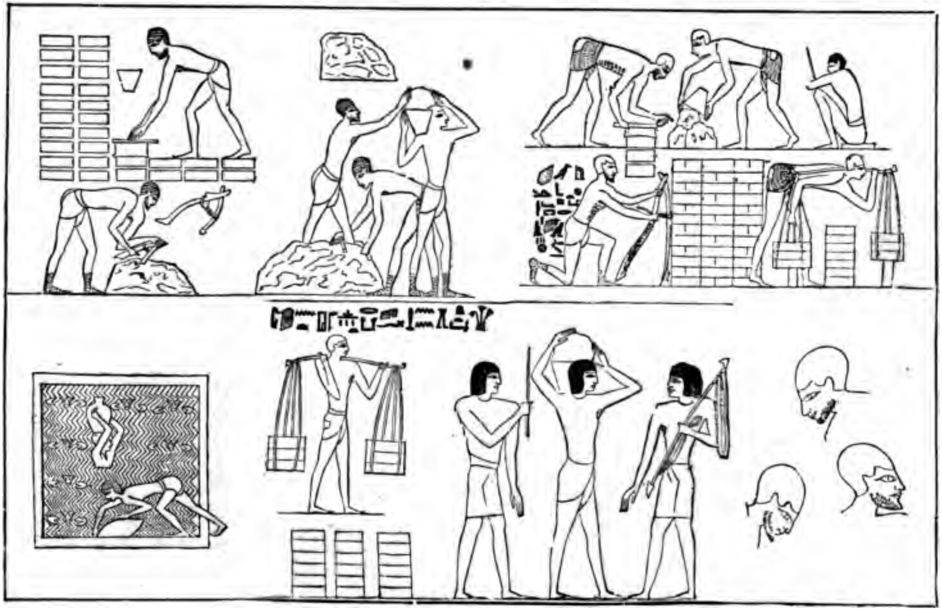
At each end of the row stands a great man. The principal figure is named Nefothph, who was governor of this district, on the east side of the Nile, and, no doubt, the owner of the tomb. To him, as the old play-book says, comes a dreary train of seven-and-thirty captives; captives with white complexions, tunics, sandals, and long beards; the women with dishevelled hair, and shod in ankle-boots. They bring with them offerings to appease the great man's wrath, a wild goat, a gazelle, a flock of ostriches, and one ibis.

Others of the tombs are sculptured with the old Egyptian symbols, the lotus and the papyrus; some have slightly vaulted roofs, some smaller inner chambers; all are alive, as it were, with the ancient life, with the manners and customs, the occupations, and the pastimes of a generation which flourished four or five thousand years ago. There is nowhere in the

world so curious a history of a people, written or painted by themselves.

We have here, says Miss Martineau, and we shall freely avail ourselves of her animated description,* the art of writing as a familiar practice, in the scribes who are numbering the stores on every hand. There are ships which would look handsome in Southampton Water, any sunny day. There are glass-blowers who might be from Newcastle, but for their dress and complexion. There are flax-dressers, spinners, weavers, and a production of cloth which an English manufacturer would study with interest. There are potters, painters, carpenters, and statuaries. There is a doctor attending a patient; and a herdsman physicking cattle. The hunters employ arrows, spears, and the lasso. The lasso is as evident as on the Pampas at this day. There is the Nile full of fish, and a hippopotamus among the ooze. There is the bastinado for the men; and the flogging of a seated woman. Nothing is more extraordinary than the gymnastics and other games of the women. Their various games of ball are excellent. The great men are attended by dwarfs and buffoons, as in a much later age; and it is clear that bodily infirmity was treated with contempt—deformed and decrepit personages appearing in the discharge of the meanest offices. It was an age when this might be looked for; and when war would be the most prominent occupation, and wrestling the prevailing sport, and probably also the discipline of the soldiery; and when hunting, fishing, and fowling would be very important pursuits. But then, what

* Miss Harriet Martineau, "Eastern Life," ii. 35–41.



BRICK-MAKERS,

(From the Tombs at Beni-hassan.)

a power of representation of these things is here! and what luxury co-existing with those early pursuits! Here are harpers with their harps of seven strings; and garments and boat-sails with elegant patterns and borders—where, by the way, angular and regular figures are pointedly preferred; and the ladies' hair, disordered and flying about in their sports, has tails and tassels, very like what may have been seen in London drawing-rooms in no very remote times. The incident which most reminds one of the antiquity of these paintings is, that the name of bird, beast, fish, or artificer is written up over the object delineated. It is the resource—not needed here, however—of the artist who wrote on his picture, "This is the man," "This is the monkey." Another barbarism is, that the great man, the occupant of the tomb, has his greatness signified by bigness, being a giant among middle-sized people. There are brick-makers also, who are shown going through the different processes of their craft; and they are supposed by some writers to be the Jews in bondage.

Such are the glimpses of Egyptian life which the traveller obtains in the tombs at Beni-hassan.

V

Dendera.

THE TEMPLE.

"A reverend pile,
With bold projections and recesses deep."
WORDSWORTH.

WE resume our voyage; sailing up the stream to the loud and discordant choral music of the Reis and his boatmen, and enjoying the magic changes of the landscape at sunrise and sunset—the bright light which, at dawn, kindles up the palm-groves and the distant hills—the after-glow, which, when the orb of day has paled its fires, illuminates minaret, and hut, and garden, and rippling waves with an indescribable glory. Yonder lies the village of Beyadieh, near the site of that Antinopolis which the Emperor Hadrian founded in honour of his handsome favourite Antinous; there rise, in awful grandeur, the dark abrupt precipices of Djebel Aboufodde, pierced with innumerable caverns, the asylum, in old times, of Christian anchorites, and, on one occasion, the refuge of the great Athanasius. On a high bank of earth above the river stands Man-

falut. Next we come in sight of Siout, the capital of Upper Egypt, and the dépôt of the slave-caravans from Darfur. It is a considerable town, with handsome mosques, and a fertile country around it.

A few miles from Girgeh lie the ruins of Abydos or This, including the hoary remains of two temples, founded by Osirei and his son Rameses the Great. Very pleasant is the scenery between Girgeh and Keneh; a fertile plain, covered with luxuriant crops of sugar cane and Indian corn, and brightened with rich clusters of the fan-leaved Doum or Theban palm. A crocodile or two are now occasionally seen among the dark herbage that fringes the sand-banks.

We next arrive at Dendera, whose temple is considered by many travellers the noblest in Egypt.* It is thrown into fine relief by the dark woods of palms which gather in its rear. The façade is vast and sombre, with four rows of six massive columns, the capital of each consisting of the head of the goddess Athor, the Venus of the Egyptians;—different, indeed, from the loose-zoned, laughing goddess of the Greeks, and wearing an expression of "bewitching half modesty," which might well impress the worshipper with admiration. The temple is in excellent preservation—as if, says Mr. St. John, the Power in whose honour it was built still sheltered its shrine from utter destruction.

The great portico is a specimen of the later Egyptian art, having been erected as late as the reign of Tiberius. Its ceiling exhibits a representation of the zodiac, which our antiquaries, says Mr. Sharpe,

* Hamilton, "Egyptiaca," pp. 196–204.

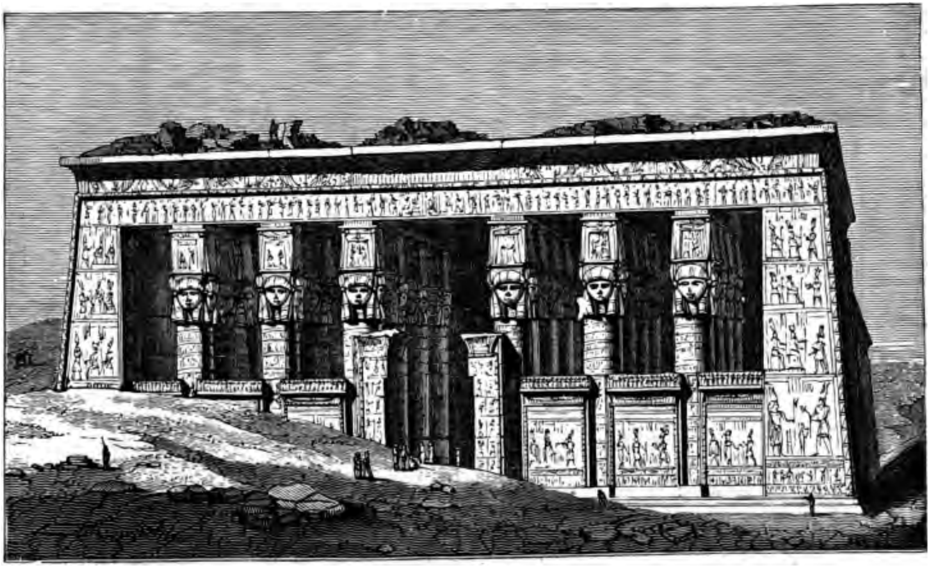
NORTHERN GATE OF TEMPLE AT DENDERA.

once thought of great antiquity, though the sign of the Scales should have taught them that it could not date further back than the reign of Augustus, who gave that name to the group of stars formerly included in the Scorpion's spreading claws.

"We cannot but admire the zeal of the Egyptians by whom this work was then finished. They were treated as slaves by their Greek fellow-countrymen; they, the fallen descendants of the conquering kings of Thebes, had every third year their houses ransacked in search of arms: the Romans only drained the province of its wealth, and the temple had perhaps never been heard of by the Emperor, who could have been little aware that the most lasting monument of his reign was being raised in the distant province of Egypt. We cannot but admire a people who, denying themselves all beyond the coarsest food and clothing as luxuries, thought a noble massive temple for the worship of the gods one of the first necessaries of life."

To the great portico succeeds a hall of six columns, with three rooms on either side. Then comes a central chamber, communicating on one side with two small rooms, and on the other with a staircase. Passing through another similar chamber, with two rooms on the west and one on the east side, we enter the "holy of holies"—the adytum, or sanctuary—which has a passage leading round it, and communicating with the rooms on either side.

The total length of the temple is about 220 feet; its width, 41 feet; or, across the portico, 50 feet. The walls are everywhere covered with a profusion



TEMPLE AT DENDERA.

of elaborate hieroglyphics, all relating to the worship of the Egyptian goddess, who had here her most sacred abode (Denderah = Téi-m-Athor, the abode of Athor). She ranked in the second class of deities, as the daughter of Ra, the sun, and was identified by the Greeks with their Aphrodite. Her symbol was the cow, and in hieroglyphics she generally appears with the head of that animal, bearing between her horns the figure of the solar disc. In the earlier Egyptian mythology she seems to have symbolized the creative principle of the world; at a later period, she became simply the goddess of the laugh, the jest, and the song.

There are two other temples at Dendera; one sacred to Isis, and another in some way connected with the Athor-worship, though, from its lateral columns bearing a distorted figure of Typhon, certain archæologists have supposed it to be dedicated to that monster, the Evil Principle of the Egyptian creed.

THE GREAT TEMPLE.

The accompanying woodcut represents the Great Temple of Athor. On the architrave is represented a procession to the goddess. All the Dendera buildings, except one propylon, are surrounded by a wall of sun-dried clay, 1000 feet long on one side, and in some parts 35 feet high.

VI.

Thebes.

"High towers, faire temples, goodly theaters,
Strong walls, rich porches, princelie pallaces,
Large streetes, brave houses, sacred sepulchers,
Sure gates, sweete gardens, stately galleries,
Wrought with faire pillours and fine imageries;
All those (O pitie!) now are turned to dust,
And overgrown with black oblivion's rust."

SPENSER.

"HUNDRED-GATED Thebes"—the "populous No" of the prophet Nahum—is a history in itself.* It was a great city in the days when Abraham led his flocks to drink of the waters of the Nile. A thousand years had rolled over its monuments and palaces when the Greek warriors encamped before the walls of Troy. Homer sung of it as the richest city in the world, through each of whose hundred gates two hundred heroes poured forth in their clashing chariots to battle and to victory. Osirtesen I. is the earliest name of renown in its annals; he was both king and chiefs priest, and his palace was a temple, and his people worshipped at the gate. Then came the Shepherd Kings, who conquered Memphis, and extended their sway to Thebes, until driven out by Aahmes I., the true founder of the

* Sharpe, "History of Egypt," *passim*.

Theban kingdom. Each successive monarch contributed to the embellishment of the ancient capital, until both banks of the Nile glittered with temples, palaces, and tombs. The Temple at Karnak was enlarged by the Amenophs, Thothmes, and the powerful Amennunt, whose overthrow by Thothmes consolidated into one the kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt. It was this queen, perhaps, who built the magnificent temple and palace at Dayr el Bahru, at the foot of the Libyan Hills, with its dromos or avenue, 1600 feet long, and its double avenue of sphinxes. Her conqueror, Thothmes III., largely added to the splendours of Karnak, and the sculptures on the tombs represent a procession of seventeen nations, who are bringing their costly gifts to pay homage to the gorgeous potentate. Next came Amenoph II., whose glory it was that he captured the great city of Nineveh. His grandson, Amenoph III., who began the temple at Luxor, is commemorated by the famous statue of the vocal Memnon. At a later period reigned Rameses I.; and after him his son Seethee I., or Osirei, the Sesostris of Manetho, who began and nearly completed the great hall of Karnak, and whose conquests extended far into the mountains of Asia. Under Rameses II. the kingdom of Upper Egypt appears to have attained its climax of wealth, glory, and power. We shall speak of him more particularly hereafter, but may here record that he decorated the city of Abydos (or This), with the temple of Osiris; and on one of its walls he carved that list of his ancestors which now, under the name of the Tablet of Abydos, is preserved in the

British Museum. At Thebes he erected a superb palace, with various colossal statues; and over one of its rooms was emblazoned the famous inscription, which recorded that books were "the medicine of the mind." Its walls were inscribed with representations of his victories over Medes, Persians, Scythians, and Armenians—over Syrians, Bithynians, and Cappadocians—over Libyans and Ethiopians.

After Rameses II. followed some less distinguished monarchs, and then another great conqueror, Rameses III., of the 20th dynasty, who built the palace-temple of Medinet Abou. With this king terminated the glorious days of Thebes. That fate which, sooner or later, overtakes every empire, now fell upon the Egyptian kingdom, and the Bubastite sovereigns of Lower Egypt rose into imperial power. Of these, one of the most eminent was Shishank or Shesonk, the Shishak of the Bible, who defeated Rehoboam and plundered Jerusalem, bringing back to Thebes the shields of gold which had shone upon the walls of Solomon's Temple (971 B.C.). The Ethiopian kings afterwards sat upon the throne of the illustrious Rameses, and the last of their race transferred the seat of government to Sais in the Delta.

The invasion of Cambyses was the first great calamity which Thebes experienced. He rifled its tombs, overthrew its temples, and destroyed the statues of its great Coptic conquerors. But in all imperial cities there is a surprising vitality, and Thebes once more regained, if not its political importance, at all events its wealth and splendour. It was at this time visited by Hecatæus of Abdera, who had served in

the army of Alexander. He explored its antiquities, and wondered at its opulence. The Memnonium, or great palace of Rameses II., was still standing, and the temples were computed to hold the immense sum of three hundred talents of gold, and two thousand three hundred talents of silver. He saw also the other three palace-temples of Thebes, now called by the names of the villages in which they stand—Luxor, Luqsor (or El-Uksor), Karnak, and Medinet-Abou.

The Theban priests showed Hecatæus the large wooden mummy cases of their predecessors, ranged in order round the walls of the temple, to the number of three hundred and forty-five; and when the Greek boasted that he was the sixteenth in descent from Jupiter, they silenced him with the remark, that those three hundred and forty-five priests had governed Thebes in succession from father to son, each a mortal and the son of a mortal, and that so many generations had passed since the gods Osiris and Horus had ruled over Egypt. In this statement there was probably some exaggeration; but yet it is certain that the antiquity of Greece, as compared with that of Egypt, was as the antiquity of Britain compared with that of Greece.

The Ptolemies contributed to the architectural grandeur of the hundred-gated city, introducing many of the modifications which had been suggested by the Greek feeling for harmony. But in the reign of Ptolemy Lathyrus, Thebes rebelled. Intrenched within their temples, the Copts defied for three years all the armies of their sovereign. Famine, and overwhelming numbers, and superior military weapons,

MEDINET-ABOU.

constrained them to yield. A terrible revenge descended upon their heads. They were sold into slavery; and the glorious memorials of their glorious history—the stately monuments which attested the genius and resources of their ancestors—were broken down by hammer and pickaxe, and shattered into masses of pitiful ruin!*

This brief historical *resumé* will enable our readers to understand more easily the following account of Theban antiquities.

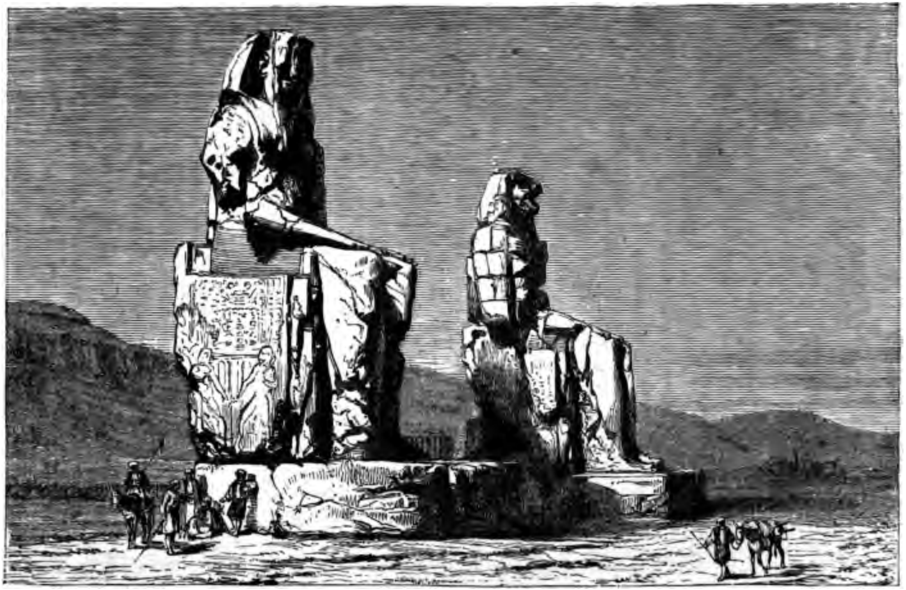
THE COLOSSI.

First of all the traveller visits the Pair—the twin-giants, the two Colossi—which, sitting alone amidst the wide sea of verdure, seem to keep vigilant though silent ward over the treasures of the past. The natives name them *Tama* and *Chama*.

There they sit, says Miss Martineau, keeping watch—hands on knees, gazing straight forward, seeming, though so much of the faces is gone, to be looking over to the monumental piles on the other side of the river, which became gorgeous temples after these throne-seats were placed here—the most immovable thrones that have ever been established on this earth. He who is popularly called the Memnon is much dilapidated. The injury is due either to Cambyses, or, as Strabo reports, to an earthquake.† One would

* Sir Gardner Wilkinson, "Modern Egypt and Thebes," ii. 140–235; Poole, "Horæ Ægyptiacæ," etc.

† So the prophet Ezekiel foretold—"No shall be rent asunder" (xxx. 15, 16).



THE COLOSSI.

like to think, says Miss Martineau, that nature, rather than man, had done it; but how came the earthquake to leave the mass of the throne and body unhurt, while shattering the shoulders and head? It is impossible that the whole was thrown over, and set up again, the fellow-colossus remaining uninjured. The inscriptions are very numerous; mostly in Latin, a few in Greek. On the pedestal is represented old Nilus, the river-god, once more busy, as in all times, wreathing the royal throne with the lotus and his water-plants. The king is Amenoph III., the second Amenoph of Manetho, — "the Sun-lord of Truth, Amnotph," the "beloved of Amun." His name is recorded in two places. Alas, that his lineaments should be effaced—that a dull blank prevails where the sculptor, as we can fancy, had carved an expression of sublime intelligence and conscious power!

The old stories tell us that from this statue, when the sun rose over the purple mountains of Araby, and flushed its solemn lips with light, there poured forth a responsive strain—

> "Morn from Memnon drew
> Rivers of melody,"—
> (TENNYSON)

a soft, sad song, like that of a breaking lute-string,—

> "Soft as Memnon's harp at morning,
> Touched with light by heavenly warning."
> (KEBLE.)

The Greeks called it Memnon's statue, and fabled that its matin-music was his greeting to his mother Aurora—thus identifying the colossal monument of the great Egyptian king with their own mythic hero,

the son of Tithonus and Aurora, who was slain by Achilles in the Trojan War. The sounds emitted have been attributed to various causes: most probably, to the artifices of the priests, who, hidden in a niche, smote the stone with an iron rod; but, also, to the passage through its chinks and crannies of light breaths of air; and to the sudden expansion of enclosed aqueous particles under the influence of the sun's rays.*

When the Nile overflows, these statues rise above the watery expanse like islands of stone. Of old their pedestals rested on the pavement of the dromos or avenue, which, lined with other statues, extended a distance of 1100 feet to the palace-temple of Amenoph. This palace-temple, once so gorgeous in its sculptured array, is now a pile of shapeless sandstone, and, at a distance, only visible as a slight inequality in the level of the plain! The sphinxes have disappeared; the columns are broken off from their bases; all is decay, spoliation, ruin. In the palmy days of Thebes, the Nile did not flow so high as this point; and the entire avenue, with its solemn images, stood upon elevated ground, conspicuous from the river. The Pair now tower about 53 feet above the soil, and are sunk 7 feet in the burning sands. From the elbow to the fingers' ends each colossal arm measures 17 feet 9 inches; and from the knee to the plant of the foot, 19 feet 8 inches. The foot was 9 feet 10 inches long. The pedestal of Tama measures 18 feet broad and 33 feet long. The throne is nearly 15 feet in height and breadth.

* Dr. Richardson, "Travels along the Mediterranean and Parts Adjacent," ii. 41.

The name and historical character of the vocal Colossus are easily determined. Pausanias records that the Egyptians called it *Thamenoph;* and this name, as we have said, occurs among the inscriptions. *Th* was the definite article of the old Coptic language; and Thamenoph, therefore, means "the Amenoph;" and as another inscription designates him the "Sun-lord," it is evident he was one of the Pharaohs, who always bore that designation.* In the ancient chronicle of Manetho, the statue is identified with the second Amenoph, who, according to Baron Bunsen, is the third Amenoph of the monuments. The name signifies, "beloved of Amun," the chief divinity of Thebes.

Amenoph, like most of his race, was a famous warrior. His kingdom extended from the copper mines near Mount Sinai, and into Ethiopia, as far as the island of Ayo, in lat. 19° 12′. He was the conqueror of more than forty Ethiopian tribes or nations, and we shall meet with traces of his splendour in the ruined palace at Luxor, and the shattered temple of Amun Kneph, in the island of Elephantine.

Still keeping on the western bank of the river, we next direct our steps to the magnificent palace of Rameses the Great †—the Rameseum, or, as it is

* Pharaoh, the Scriptural designation for all the Egyptian kings, is derived from *Phra,* the Coptic name of the God of the Sun (*Ph,* the, and *ra,* the sun).

† We abridge from Heeren, and other sources, an account of this great king, the most illustrious name in Egyptian history. He is called, says Heeren ("Historical Researches," ii. 307–315), Sethosis, Sesorsis, or Sesostris; and the pages of Manetho, Herodotus, and Diodorus, bear equal testimony to his fame. On the monuments, however, he

more commonly, but erroneously called, the Memnonium.

is nowhere mentioned by the names of Sethosis or Sesostris: on them he is called Rameses; but that he bore both these names Manetho himself informs us; and other writers likewise assert that the son of Amenophis was called Rameses. Sesostris means, by way of eminence, "the great King of the Egyptians."

Rameses the Great (as we may very properly call him, to distinguish him from his namesakes) is not to be considered as a mere creation of the imagination. That he is not simply a symbolical king, but historically a monarch of Egypt, is so obvious, as almost to render it unnecessary to mention it. There is a perfect agreement between the monuments erected in commemoration of his exploits, and the records handed down by history; as the latest discoveries convince us that the name of no Pharaoh so often appears upon them, or with so much splendour, as the name and title of Rameses the Great. "Beloved and confirmed of Amun—Son of the God of the Sun—Ruler of the obedient people," are titles here frequently bestowed upon him.

Herodotus, who derived his information from the priests at Memphis, enumerated, in speaking of Sesostris and the Pharaohs mentioned by him, only the presents they gave to the temple of Ptah, in this capital: which, in this instance, consisted of six tremendous colossal statues—two of himself and wife, each 30 yards high; and four of his children, each 20. According to Diodorus, he founded many great buildings, erecting in the towns of Egypt temples for the principal gods which the inhabitants honoured. Thebes, in particular, enjoyed his favours. Two obelisks, 120 feet high, containing an account of his treasures and the nations he had conquered, were placed before the temple of Amen-Ra; and a new and splendid ark for the oracle of Cedra, gilded outside and silvered within, was bestowed on the interior. All these glories have vanished; but his name still lives on many of the monuments of Thebes. It has been discovered on several parts of the great palace of Karnak, particularly on the massive pillars in the immense saloon there, which seems almost entirely to have been his work. It is again found on the great propyla and pillars in the first court of the palace of Luxor, as likewise on one side of the obelisks at the same place; finally, in almost every part of what Diodorus Siculus calls the tomb of Osymandias (the Rameseum, or Memnonium), the greater portion of which, if not the whole, must certainly be attributed to him; and it is also commemorated on the palace of Abydus, the Flaminian obelisk in Rome, and on many other monuments. Nubia, in particular, is full of his memorials: nearly on every section of the great temple of Abou-Simbel, of Kalabshé, Derri, and Schoa, his name occurs, and pictures of his exploits. What a gigantic mind must his have been, that could design so many and such marvellous works!

THE RAMESEUM.

> ...."On the holy hearth
> The lars and lemures moan with midnight plaint."
> MILTON.

If it were possible for the spirits of the dead to revisit the glimpses of the moon, and haunt the scenes most dear to them during their earthly existence, surely the old Egyptian kings would nightly roam among these hoary ruins, and lament the vanished splendours of their creed and dynasty!

The Rameseum was both a palace and a temple—the residence of the sovereign and his gods. It was unworthy of neither, for never did even Egyptian architecture create a more splendid pile. What art "inconceivable to us" has erected, violence inconceivable to us has overthrown; and the heaped-up stones of the Rameseum are a more powerful commentary on the nothingness of human ambition than the homilies of a thousand moralists.

The propylon, or out-work, is grandly massive. Sculptures embellish it, very quaint and vivid. It formed the entrance to the first court, whose walls are destroyed. Some picturesque Osiride columns remain, however; and at their foot lie the remains of the hugest statue that was ever fashioned by Egyptian sculptor! It was a fitting ornament for a city of giants; such an effigy as would have adorned a palace built and inhabited by Titans! Unhappily, it is broken from the middle; but when entire it must have weighed—what think you, reader?—about 887 tons, 5½ cwts.! It measures 22 feet 4 inches across

THE RAMESEUM.

the shoulders, and 14 feet 4 inches from the neck to the elbow. The toes are from 2 to 3 feet long. The whole mass is composed of Syene granite; and I offer it as a problem to engineers and contractors of the present day, how were such enormous blocks—how were nearly 900 tons of granite—conveyed some hundreds of miles from Syene to Thebes?

The second court was divided into aisles, or avenues, by rows of huge Osiride and circular columns, covered with emblematical and historical carving. Three flights of steps led up from its sun-lit area into the northern corridor of Osiride pillars. On each side of the central one stood a black granite statue of Rameses II. This was a fit introduction to the splendours of the Grand Hall, which seemed like some stately forest petrified into stone, with the lotus, the papyrus, and the river-plants all suddenly frozen in the midst of their budding life. The lighting of this hall is beautiful. "The roof in the centre," says Miss Martineau,* "was raised some feet above the lateral roofing, so that large oblong spaces were left for a sight of the blue sky; and when they admitted the slanting rays of the rising and setting sun upon this grove of pillars, and, through them, lighted up the pictured walls, the glory must have been great." These roofs rested upon forty-eight pillars; roofs painted blue, and studded with golden stars, like the sky. Twelve central pillars were larger than the others. All the capitals were sculptured in imitation of the graceful bell-shaped flower of the papyrus; and the decorations, designed from the stalks and flowers of different plants,

* Harriet Martineau, "Eastern Life," i. 294.

painted in blue and green, and often exquisitely beautiful.

The sculptures which cover the walls are all devoted to the glorification of Rameses. He is represented as paying his homage to the gods, and receiving from them various privileges. Amun the Supreme is here, with the other two who complete the highest triad; and the god of letters, Thoth, notes the dates of the royal victories on his palm-branch. Elsewhere we see him honoured with the priceless gifts of life and power; or he is intrusted with the sword and the sceptre, to smite his foes with the one, and to rule his subjects with the other. The use he made of his gifts is also illustrated. We are shown his battles, his sieges, his triumphs, his numerous captives; nor are his twenty-three sons or his three daughters forgotten. An inscription on one of the architraves of the Great Hall describes the splendour and beauty of the edifice, and dedicates it to the king's father, the Supreme, who says, "It is my will that your structure shall be as stable as the sky!" Alas! Time has painfully falsified the boast. And Isis adds, "I grant you long life to govern Egypt."*

The next chamber is supposed to have been the library of the palace. An astronomical subject is blazoned on the ceiling, and an inscription, alluding to the value of the apartment, speaks of the "books of Thoth." This Egyptian Mercury is here attended, as Champollion records, by a figure with an eye in his head labelled, "Source of light;" and the goddess Saf is in like manner attended by a figure with

* Champollion, "Lettres sur l'Egypte."

an ear, labelled "Source of hearing;" signifying, perhaps, that man arrives at knowledge through the ear and the eye.

The sculptures on the exterior walls breathe only of battle and strife—the pride, pomp, and circumstance of victorious war. Rameses is represented as standing aloft in his war-chariot, drawing his huge bow, the reins tied around his waist, and two quivers crossed at his right hand, of which the exterior is decorated with an extended lion. In the battle a real lion rages to and fro. The conqueror drives headlong over prostrate and bound captives, while his enemies fall around him in all the attitudes of despair and degradation. A phalanx of gallant spearmen bear down the hostile forces with irresistible vigour.

A curious scene describes an attack upon a rock-built fortress, named "the strong town of Watsch." Under cover of the testudo or shield—a frame-work large enough to shelter several men—the Egyptian warriors, led by the king's sons, are engaged in mining, and planting scaling-ladders against the wall. The defenders, meanwhile, are hurling down darts, and stones, and spears; and yet, as if conscious of the fruitlessness of further resistance, are waving signals of surrender, and despatching their heralds to implore the conqueror's clemency.

Such was the Rameseum. It looked towards the east, facing the magnificent temple at Karnak. Its propylon, in the days of its glory, was in itself a structure of the highest architectural grandeur, and the portion still extant measures 234 feet in length.

The principal edifice was about 600 feet long, and 200 feet broad, containing six courts and chambers, with about 160 columns 30 feet high. Did the Egyptians build for time or for eternity?

Our course now conducts us to—

THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS,

passing the small temple of El-Kurneh—the *Setheum*, erected by Sethos to Amen-Ra—and plunging into the arid ravine which winds among the mountains in the rear of Thebes to the ancient Necropolis.

The valley, after various meanderings, terminates at a barrier of grim and dreary perpendicular precipices.

In their abrupt and gloomy wall may be discerned a few dark apertures, like entrances to mysterious caverns. These are the portals of the tombs which the great Theban monarchs made for themselves in the desolate places.

They are all interesting, all afford matter for meditation; but our limits compel us to restrict most of our observations to one of them; and we will select that which Belzoni explored with so much tact and energy, and whose occupant was Osirei, Seethee, or Sethos I., the father of Rameses the Great.

The explorer first descends a flight of ruined steps to a perpendicular depth of 25 feet, and then finds himself in a passage whose walls are covered with inscriptions about Osirei. Next comes another staircase, decorated with grotesque figures of genii, and leading into a second passage or chamber, of large dimensions, very beautifully painted. Here are the

emblems—a boat and a serpent—of Kneph, "the Spirit of the Supreme, which moves upon the face of the waters;" and of Phtah, one of the creative gods, the patron or tutelary deity of the occupant of the tomb. Ten steps conduct us into another superb chamber, from whence you pass into the so-called Hall of Beauty, a cell or apartment 24 feet by 13, richly embellished with sculptures and paintings—a species of Egyptian Pantheon, where all the gods and goddesses are met in solemn conclave. The roof, which four square columns support, blazes with golden stars, and the walls are covered with processions of a curious character;—an immeasurable serpent being carried on the shoulders of a train of personages in one place; and in another, four different groups appearing, each consisting of four persons of different complexions: four red, namely, Egyptians; four primrose-coloured, Asiatics; four black, Nabasi or Africans; and four pale-yellow, with long flowing robes, and feathers in their hair, Europeans or Northmen.

Proceeding further, the traveller enters Belzoni's Hall of Pillars, 28 feet long by 27 feet broad, containing six huge pillars in two rows. At either side is a small chamber; one on the right, having the figure of a cow painted on the wall, is known as the Hall of Isis (10 feet by 9); that on the left, from its allegorical drawings, is named the Hall of Mysteries (10 feet 5 inches by 8 feet 9 inches). At the end of the hall we pass into a large saloon with an arched roof or ceiling, and measuring 32 feet long by 27 feet broad. Various passages and chambers lead out of it, which it is unnecessary to describe; but we

may add, that the entire extent of this subterranean labyrinth penetrates the solid rock to a length of 320 feet.*

Returning to the saloon, we may remember that it was here Belzoni discovered the sarcophagus of Osirei, now one of the curiosities of Sir John Soane's museum. He describes it as made of the finest Oriental alabaster, 9 feet 5 inches long, and 3 feet 7 inches wide. Its thickness was only 2 inches, and a light placed within it lit it up like a transparency. Within and without it was sculptured over with hundreds of figures, none exceeding two inches in height, and representing the funeral procession aud religious ceremonies in honour of the deceased.

Such are the places, says Miss Martineau, where, in the words of Isaiah, "the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, each in his own house;" and such are the regions supposed by him to be moved at the approach of the tyrant, and to stir up their dead to meet him who has become as weak as they, and must now be brother of the worm, and be brought down to Hades, to the sides of the pit. From Egypt this method of burial spread far over the East, and the caverns of the hills contained the successive generations of many peoples besides the Hebrews, who had, in their civilization, followed the ideas and methods of Egypt. In God's infinite providence, not only the *forms* spread, but the *ideas* which had suggested them. After the example of Egypt, men preserved, amidst more or less corruption, the belief in the Supreme God; in a divine moral

* Belzoni, "Narrative of Operations," &c., i. 360–366.

government; in a future life and retribution; and in that highest of all truths, that moral good is the greatest good, and moral evil the deepest evil. So from the valley of the Nile this mysterious faith spread into many lands, disguised, but never wholly concealed; working good in its generation—assuredly more good than evil—until, becoming incrusted with later superstitions, and its true meaning passing out of the memories of men, it was time that a purer and fuller revelation should be made, and the Star of love appeared to the watchers in the East!

It is necessary for the reader to bear in mind these doctrines of the early Egyptians, if he would understand the motive which induced the construction of such magnificent sepulchres. Death, to the Egyptian king, was the portal of life—of a future where he would receive such recompense or punishment as his earthly career deserved. If punished, he would have to pass through various mournful metempsychoses—the "orbit of necessity"—for from 5000 to 10,000 years, resuming at last a human body. Death, as we have already hinted, was to him a thing of primary import; to prepare for death was his constant aim; and bearing as he did the twofold character of priest and king, no tomb could be too superb, or too carefully guarded from profane intrusion. There he would dwell, perhaps, for a long succession of silent years, until prepared for elevation to the presence of the eternal gods and the companionship of his immortal ancestors.

Before we quit this solemn spot, we must glance at the Harpers' Tomb, first mentioned by Bruce, and

therefore often called by his name. It extends 405 feet into the hill-side, and the small lateral chambers are embellished with vivid pictures of the ancient Egyptian life. Here, the cooks are kneading bread or slaughtering cattle; there, the gardeners are toiling in their blooming parterres: here, the walls are hung with arms and standards; there, they are clothed in tapestry and illuminated with graceful lamps. The tomb obtains its distinctive appellation from the figures of ten harpers playing before the god Ao, or Hercules. They are attired in white garments striped with red, and their harps have each ten strings.*

The tombs of the Pharaoh who reigned, it is supposed, in right of his wife Taosiri, and of the Pharaoh who pursued the migrating Hebrews to the Red Sea, have each their peculiar features of interest. In the former, the king is shown as a man and a spirit—his past and his present states of being—with the scarabæus, head downwards, representing the resurrection which links the two together. In the latter, the wide extent of the monarch's dominion is represented by five lines of tribute-bearers—black, red, light red, brown, and yellow—offering gifts of ivory, apes, leopards, skins, gold, and other valuables. The illustrations of this tomb are of great interest, from their exhibiting the Egyptian trades. The men are at work, for instance, on the monstrous sphinx, chipping away at the huge granite blocks from which it was fashioned.†

We now cross the Nile to the "most magnificent

* Sir G. Wilkinson, "Modern Egypt and Thebes," ii. 201–210.
† Dr. Richardson, "Travels along the Mediterranean," &c., i. 279–281.

spot in Egypt," and, landing on the eastern bank, proceed to explore the vast ruins which lie at El-Karnac, or

KARNAK.

Mrs. Lushington, an English traveller, describes in emphatic language the feelings of amazement and wonder with which she first beheld them—feelings which every traveller shares. It was long, she says, after she reached her tent before she recovered from the emotion which the view of these stupendous monuments of antiquity had produced. No one, indeed, who has not seen them with his bodily eyes can understand the mingled awe and admiration they excite. No painting, or verbal description, can embody even a tithe of their grandeur. No words can impart a conception of the profusion of pillars, standing, prostrate, inclining against each other, broken, or entire;—stones of a gigantic size propped up by columns, and columns resting upon stones which appear ready to crush the gazer under their sudden fall; yet, on a second view, you are convinced that nothing but an earthquake could move them: and all, though three or four thousand years old, are covered with sculpture, which is as fresh as if finished but yesterday; sculpture, too, truly exquisite in design and execution, and not of grotesque and hideous objects, which we are accustomed to suppose the normal ideas of Egyptian mythology, but figures of gods, warriors, priests, kings, and heroes—all instinct with a vivid life!

When the French army, led by Napoleon, came in sight of the Theban monuments, they suddenly

RUINS OF KARNAK.

halted, and, in a passion of admiration, clapped their hands and shouted aloud, as if, says Denon, the end and object of their glorious toils, and the complete conquest of Egypt, were achieved and finally secured by taking possession of the ruins of its ancient metropolis.* Here, in the depth of the stillness, lie the shattered memorials of an extinct civilization. Here was enthroned the Power of Intellect when the rest of the world was buried in darkness and shadow. Here, where the beetle crawls in the sunshine, and the bat flits to and fro in the twilight, a mighty Monarchy once displayed its grandeur, and a mysterious Faith erected its solemn shrines! Who, then, can gaze upon the wondrous scene without acknowledging its sublime influence—without reverencing the *genius loci*?

Karnak is regarded as the principal site of Diospolis—that portion of the ancient capital which remained tolerably entire in the days of Strabo. Its temple, built by kings of the 18th dynasty, is pronounced without a parallel in the whole world; and such is its magnitude, such the beauty and harmony of its various details, that even the sensuous art of Greece could not create its equal. It has twelve principal entrances, each composed of several huge propyla and colossal gateways, besides other buildings attached to them, which in themselves exceed the dimensions of ordinary temples. Their sides, in many instances, are equal to the bases of the greater number of the pyramids in Middle Egypt, and are built in the so-called Rustic style, each layer of stone projecting a little beyond

* Denon, "Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt," chap. i.

that which is above it. One of the propyla consists wholly of granite, and is literally covered with exquisite hieroglyphics. On each side of many of them were formerly planted colossal statues of granite and basalt, from 20 to 30 feet in height, either sitting or standing erect. Of equal magnificence were the avenues of sphinxes, leading in several directions to the propyla; and one of which, 40 feet wide, extended across the whole plain to Luxor, or nearly two miles. Between each sphinx was an interval of six feet, so that there must have been on either side some twelve or thirteen hundred of these huge monsters! *

The body of the great temple, which is preceded by a long court, at whose sides are colonnades of thirty columns in length, and through whose centre run two rows not less than 50 feet high, consists, first, of the superb "Hall of Columns," built by Seethee I. (or Osirei), 309 feet long and 170 wide; the roof, supported by one hundred and thirty-four pillars, some of which are 66 feet high and 36 feet in circumference; and others, 41 feet high and 27½ feet in circumference. Next appear two shapely obelisks, erected by the queen Amen-nunt, marking the entrance to the adytum, or sanctuary, where the monarch is represented as embraced by the arms of Isis. The adytum, built entirely of red granite, is divided into three apartments. The central room is the principal: it measures 20 feet long, 16 feet wide, and 13 feet high. Three blocks of granite form the roof, which is studded with clusters

* For abundant details, see Sir G. Wilkinson's "Modern Egypt and Thebes"—a complete treasury of erudition and research.

of stars, glowing on a ground of azure. The tomb is remarkable for the number of its astronomical emblems. It is encompassed with a golden circle, 365 cubits in circumference, to represent the number of days included in the year. The rising and setting of the stars are also depicted with considerable accuracy, showing that the Egyptians were by no means ignorant of astronomical mysteries.

This sumptuous edifice appears to have been completed in the reign of Osymandias, or Rameses II.—the Rameses the Great already spoken of, and, in fact, the Sesostris of the Greeks.* His statue, represented in a sitting posture, was considered by the ancients as the largest in the country. Its foot alone was seven cubits in length, and the following inscription recorded the glory of the great monarch whom it was designed to commemorate:—

> "I am Osymandias, king of kings: if any one desires to know what a prince I am, and where I lie, let him excel my deeds!"

It is to this monument the poet Shelley refers in a well-known sonnet:—

> "I met a traveller from an antique land,
> Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
> Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
> Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
> And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
> Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
> Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
> The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;
> And on the pedestal these words appear:
> 'My name is Osymandias, king of kings:
> Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!'
> Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
> Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
> The lone and level sands stretch far away." †

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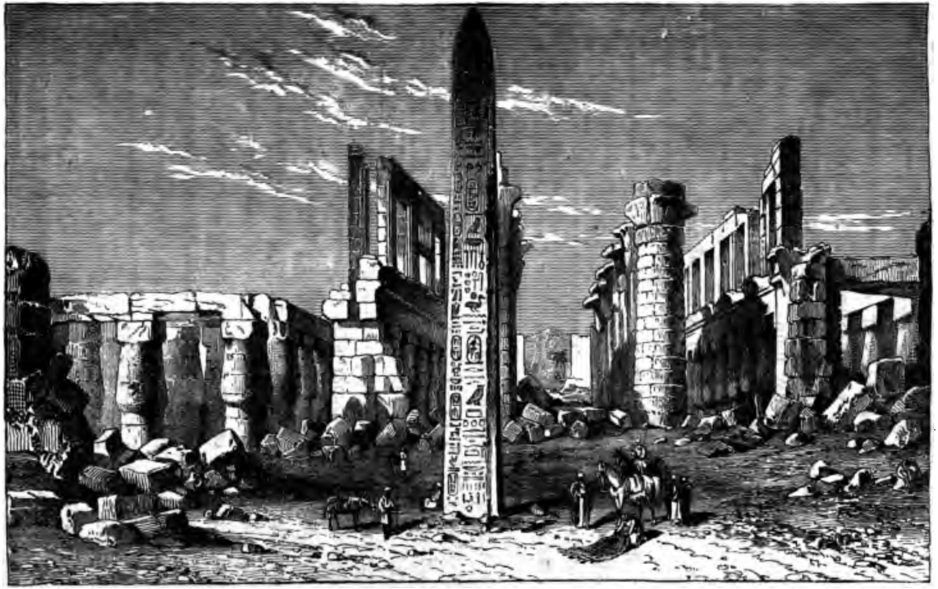
* Heeren, "Historical Researches," ii. 234.

† Shelley, "Poetical Works," ed. by Mrs. Shelley.



GREAT HALL AT KARNAK.

Some of the finest sculptures in Egypt are to be found on the eastern external wall of the Great Hall of Karnak. They depict the triumphs and wars of the Egyptian monarchs, especially of Osirei and his illustrious son, and are remarkable for their vivid expression and masterly execution.* It should be added, that the only known allusion to the Jews on the monuments of Egypt occurs at Karnak, where, on one of the temples, the conqueror Sheshonk, or Shishak, is leading by the hair a group of Hebrew prisoners. On one side, says Dean Stanley, stands the king himself, on a colossal scale, holding in his hand a train of captives. Meeting him is the god Amun, also leading a train of lesser captives by strings, which he holds in his hand, and which are fastened round their necks. On eleven are inscribed the names of their cities; and of these the third from Amun's hand was believed by Champollion to bear the name of *King of Judah*. This identification, which for many years attracted traveller after traveller to gaze on the only likeness of any Jewish king that had survived to our time, has been of late much disputed. It is now, perhaps, only permitted to dwell on the Jewish physiognomy of the whole series of captives, and the contrast, so striking from the inverse intensity of interest with which we regard them, between the diminutive figures and mean countenances of the captives from Palestine, and the gigantic god and gigantic conqueror from Egypt.†

In addition to the edifices at which we have thus

* Rev. T. W. Aveling, "Voices of Many Waters."
† Dean Stanley, "Lectures on the Jewish Church," 2nd ser., pp. 384, 385.

PROPYLON AT THEBES.

cursorily glanced, various propyla and portions of temples are to be seen south of the Great Hall. On either side the pyla of one of the courts lie the remains of four enormous statues hewn out of limestone or granite. They all wear sculptured belts, most richly and beautifully wrought; one has the sacred breastplate. Mr. Aveling, a recent traveller, measured the latter figure, and found it to be 6 feet across the chest; the middle figure was 10 feet, with arms 8 feet long.

A row of ninety crio-sphinxes, or more, leads southward from the temple to which these colossal statues belong—running parallel to the one which follows the direct road to Luxor, and connected with it by a narrow avenue crossing at right angles. One sphinx, in a group found here, has a woman's head, "with features beautifully expressive both of power and gentleness, and wearing that aspect of profound repose with which the old artists loved to represent their deities and kings." *

Further details of the wonders of Karnak—of its obelisks and statues, and pyla and propyla, all involved in mournful ruin, but all attesting the intellectual supremacy of the men who designed them so far back in the world's dim history—would perplex rather than interest the reader. He will already have pictured to himself this scene of splendid desolation, and formed some idea of the majesty of Egyptian achievement. Across the plain—our road lined with mournful piles of fragments—that road once traversed by the sumptuous processions of priests and kings and worshippers—that road once alive

* Rev. T. W. Aveling, "Voices of Many Waters."

with toiling thousands, and brilliant with the works of a subtle art and an exhaustless industry—we move onward, in thoughtful silence, to El-Uksor, or

LUXOR,*

where the mud hovels and paltry buildings of an Arab village strangely jar with the remains of its ancient grandeur.

Here a vast and splendid temple stands on the

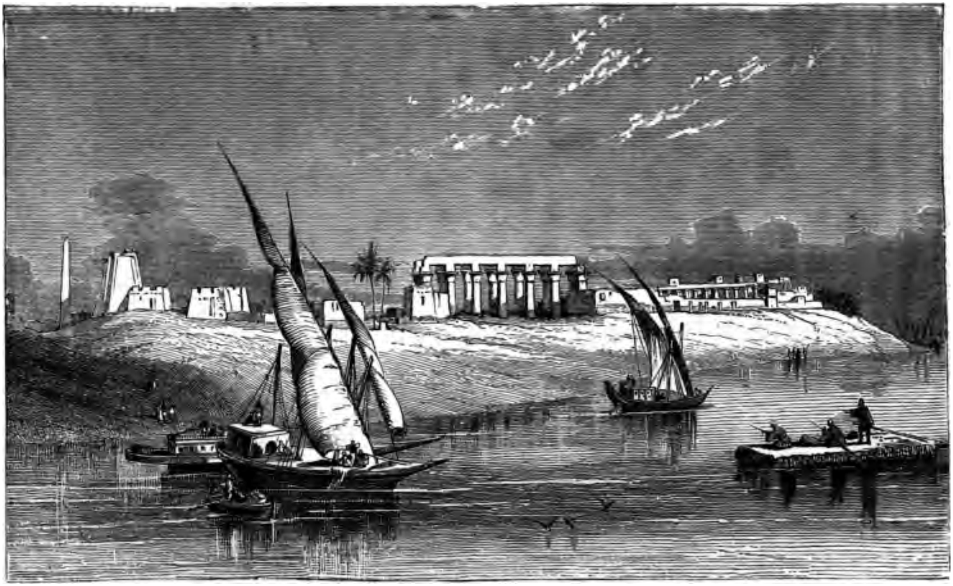
* The distinguished traveller, Mr. W. G. Palgrave, has the following remarks on these interesting localities:—"Luxor, Karnak, Kornah, Rameseum, Medinet-Abou, and the intervening ruins, all belong to one and the same huge city, the Thebes of Egypt. Within historical memory the site was yet one, not divided as now; for the Nile, instead of flowing west of Luxor and Karnak, thus separating one half of ancient Thebes from the other, followed a much more easterly course under the mountains by the Red Sea side, leaving the Libyan plain wide and unbroken. Indeed, it is said to have adopted its present direction only two centuries since. Now ploughing up the mid-level, and wandering as at random among the ruins, it undermines some, tilts up others, and will probably sweep not a few clean away—Luxor, for example. A few thousand years more and Herodotus and the Ghizeh Pyramids will probably alone remain to vindicate for Rameses and his brethren the eternity they sought to secure by so much labour and costly forethought.

"The situation of Thebes, as the river formerly ran, was admirably adapted for a capital of that time; a noble plain, nowhere wider or richer in Upper Egypt, constantly refreshed by the free play of the winds from north, east, and west, closing in southwards only; while direct land communications lead on one side to Koseyr, that ancient arbour and deposit of Arab commerce; and on the other to the great oasis of the 'Wah,' once of Jupiter Ammon, and thence right to Central Africa: north and south passes the great liquid and ever-open road of the Nile. We should remember that in the days, those ancient days, when Thebes flourished, the staple trade of Egypt lay all with Africa and Arabia; at a much later date, Greek influence and the growing importance of the Mediterranean coast brought down the capital towards the Delta, and ultimately fixed it at Alexandria, on the northern shore. But Greece only entered Egypt to degenerate, and to help Egypt to degenerate in turn; the best days of the Nile Valley were certainly the earliest."—*From "A Visit to Upper Egypt," by William Gifford Palgrave (Macmillan's Magazine, January* 1867).

rising ground, commanding a fine view of the Nile and the Theban plain. In approaching it from the north—the most convenient route—the first notable object is a superb propylon, 200 feet long, and the top of it 57 feet above the present level of the soil. Two of the finest obelisks in the world formerly guarded, as it were, the portal of this noble pile; but one has been removed to the Place de la Concorde at Paris; the other lies deeply embedded in the sand, a monolith of red granite, between 7 and 8 feet square at the base, and upwards of 80 feet in height. The hieroglyphics which embellish it are cut with unusual distinctness to a depth of nearly two inches. In the rear of the obelisks, and immediately in front of the propylon, stand two colossal statues, also of red granite. Though buried in the ground to the chest, they still measure about 22 feet from thence to the top of their mitres.*

The eastern wing of the northern façade of the propylon is enriched with an animated sculpture of a crowded battle scene. So truthful is it, and so eloquent, that as one sees the shock of contending squadrons, and the rush of the furious chariots, one almost hears the clash of swords, the twang of the whirring arrows, and the shouts of the maddened foemen. The king towers above the mêlée in a car drawn by two horses, and behind him waves the royal standard. Here, the empty chariots are swept onward by the uncontrolled steeds in fiery impetus down a precipitous descent, and headlong into a rolling river; there, the charioteers are rushing towards the

* Wilkinson, "Modern Egypt and Thebes," vol. ii., *in locis.*



VIEW OF LUXOR.

walls of the town, flying from the arrows of the victorious Egyptians. Others are crowding through the open gates, amid the shrieks and lamentations of the despairing citizens, who have thronged to the battlements to witness the rout of their fellow-countrymen. Everywhere the scene is instinct with life, motion, energy. The battle rages before your eyes with all its alternations of hope, despair, victory, and defeat. It is as if one of Homer's stirring pictures had been embodied in stone. And, to close the drama, in another compartment you may see the conqueror seated on his throne, with a sceptre in his left hand, and before him a sad array of captives about to fall under the executioner's cruel sword; while the vanquished monarch, with his arms bound behind him to a car, also approaches to receive his doom.

Passing through this noble gateway, the pilgrim enters a ruined portico of very large dimensions; from which a double row of seven columns with lotus-carved capitals, and each 22 feet in circumference, conducts him into a court 160 feet long and 140 feet wide, terminated at each side by a similar range of pillars. Beyond lies another portico of thirty-two columns; and then comes the adytum, or interior part of the temple. Some antiquaries have been of opinion that here, and not at Karnak, should we look for that palace of Osymandias which is described in such glowing language by Diodorus.

Thus have we explored the ruins of ancient Thebes, except, indeed, the palace-temple of Rameses III., which is to be seen at Medinet-Abou, on the western bank of the Nile. The temple of Medinet-

Abou fronted that of Luxor, on the opposite side of the river; and that of Dayr faced the glorious pile of Karnak. Hence all these superb structures formed so many stages or prominent points in the religious processions of the priests. Though the tabernacle of Amun was generally enshrined at Karnak (the true Diospolis), yet every year it was borne across the river to remain a few days in Libya; and we can fancy what pomp and gorgeous ceremonial accompanied this solemn translation; and how the broad plain resounded with harp, and cymbal, and chant; and how along the avenues of sphinxes and colossal statues the interminable train of priests and worshippers moved onward in an ecstasy of enthusiasm.*

The temple at Medinet-Abou is upwards of 500 feet in length, while the cella measures nearly 150 feet broad without the walls. These are crowded with sculptures. In one place we see the king crowned. He sits on a canopied throne, borne by his twelve sons. A great procession follows of princes, soldiers, priests, and various official personages. A scribe is reading from a scroll; the high-priest fills the air with incense; strains of joy proceed from a party of musicians. The accompanying hieroglyphs explain that the king has assumed the crown of the Upper and Lower kingdoms; and carrier-pigeons fly to convey the news to the gods of the north, south, east, and west.

There are some vigorous battle-pictures, illustrative

* Dr. Richardson, "Travels along the Mediterranean, and Adjacent Parts," ii. 94, 96.

of the power of the great king. The scribes are numbering horrid heaps of severed heads, each heap containing three thousand. Piles of tongues are also noted. On the outer walls is represented a naval engagement between the Egyptians, whose galleys bear a lion's head at the prow, and some Asiatic people (the Cretans and Carians?). Towns are beleaguered, in other places, by masses of struggling warriors; in others, there are gorgeous triumphs and splendid processions; and in all the deities are introduced, approving and befriending the favoured race.*

These Theban antiquities, therefore, offer a series of lively pictures of the highest civilization which the world had attained four thousand years ago. Peace and war, art and science, the inner and outer life of the people, their trades, their amusements, their battles, their processions, their belief in the gods, their faith in the soul's immortality—all are recorded and illustrated on the storied walls and the colossal statues which are gathered here on the banks of the Nile. What lessons do they convey? That while justly proud of our modern civilization, laws, and society, we should not decry the laws, society, and civilization of this remote and partly vanished Egypt. That in all ages and all countries men have known enough for their own happiness; and that certain great ideas nave been vital and active from the earliest time. To the Egyptians, you see, forty centuries since, was given a knowledge of manufactures and sciences, of home comforts, of social luxuries, of sculpture and

* Heeren, "Historical Researches," ii. 247, *et seq.*

painting, of agricultural operations, of legal order, and religious worship; of much, in fact, which we are too apt to associate with the triumphs of the European intellect and the glories of the present age. Let us beware how we dogmatize about the history of the world !

Let us do justice to the Past, even while we value, as we ought to value, the achievements of the present, and look forward, with the poet, to the fuller wisdom and completer happiness of the future,—

> " For I doubt not through the ages
> One increasing purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widened
> With the process of the suns."
>
> TENNYSON.

VII.

Edfou.

"Et viridem Ægyptum nigra fæcundat arena,
Et diversa ruens septem discurrit in ora."
VIRGIL, *Georgics* iv. 200

"And where the stream......
Broods o'er green Egypt with dark wave of mud,
And pours through many a mouth its branching flood."
SOTHEBY.

BIDDING farewell to Thebes, we resume our voyage up the Nile, whose banks are here enriched with rows of palms, and fields of castor-oil plants and cotton. We shall not tarry at Hermonthis, nor turn aside to visit its small Ptolemaic temple, rich as it is in memorials of the witch-queen Cleopatra. Esneh, or Isna, is the head-quarters of the banished Almées, or dancing-girls, who flaunt about the bazaars in all the ostentation of shameless immodesty. The portico of the temple is a noble specimen of the later Egyptian architecture. The columns are tall and slender, and their capitals richly carved in imitation of various plants and flowers. At 'Eilythia, or El-Kab, in the arid Desert, is a group of singular tombs, or grottoes, excavated in the solid rock, vaulted, and with ceilings elaborately painted. They belong to the early kings of

the third period, immediately after the expulsion of the Shepherds. Their decorations furnish some curious glimpses into that inner life of old Egypt of which we have already spoken. We see the people at work in the fields, and busy on the river, and merry in their houses.* This is no vision rising from the depths of a conscious imagination. We have it all before us in vivid colours painted on the rock. Under our very eyes, as it were, the ploughman is furrowing the fertile soil; and the sower, scattering the seed, follows in his footsteps; and then come the labouring oxen which bury the grain by trampling it in; so that afterwards the husbandman has only to await quietly the time of harvest. The driver of the oxen treading out the wheat is singing; and here is his song, written up beside his picture:†—

"Thresh for yourselves, O oxen!
Thresh for yourselves.
Thresh for yourselves, O oxen!
Thresh for yourselves.
Measures for yourselves!
Measures for your masters.
Measures for yourselves!
Measures for your masters."

Ay, this is the lay which the Egyptian drivers chanted long, long ago, when Moses was a child. The scribes, meanwhile, are measuring the wheat as it is deposited in the granary; and the owner of the estate is surveying his live stock, his cattle, and his pigs, like a midland county squire. Yonder is a wine-press at work, crushing out the purple grapes

* Miss Martineau, "Eastern Life: Present and Past."
† Champollion, "Lettres sur l'Egypte," 11me et 12me lettres.

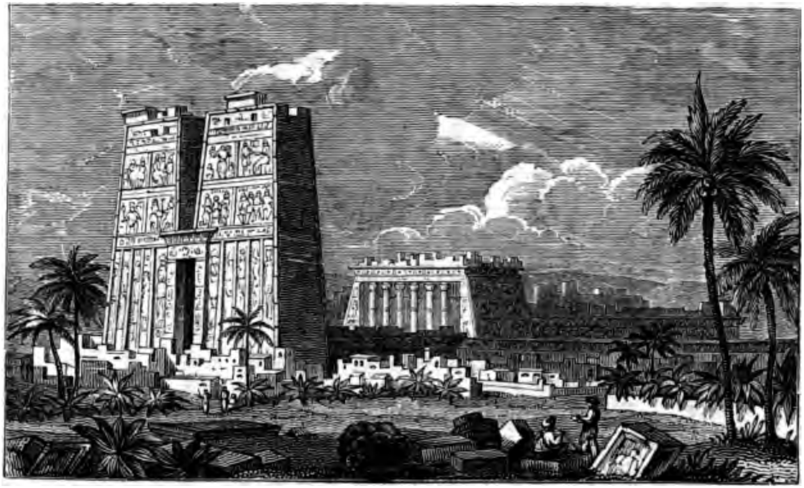
which ripened in sunny vineyards far away among the distant hills. And now a boat passes by, with bright-coloured sail and steady oars; while after his water-excursion the master betakes himself to a sumptuous banquet—flesh, and fowl, and fruits, and cakes, and wine from his own vineyards—all, as you may note, to the sound of merry music. But like those bright lyrics of the poet Horace, which begin so blithely and end with so sad a strain, these pictures of a full and vigorous career terminate in darkness. You see the wealthy land-owner and noble in the hands of the embalmers; next, as a mummy, stretched upon the bier which the sacred boat carries across the Silent River; and, lo, now he tarries at the gates of the Eternal Land, where the shadows of the dead and the judge, awful Osiris, sit in solemn majesty to pass sentence upon the deeds done in the flesh.

In ancient Egypt, as in modern England, thus passed life away—life, with its toil, its success, its failure, its harvest, its revel, and its music—summed up at the last in the two melancholy words, *Hic jacet!*

The next point of interest for the Nile voyager is the Temple of Edfou.

It stands, says Mr. Bartlett,* on rising ground not far from the river; and as the external wall with which it is surrounded is entire, gives us a complete idea of the vast size and massive grandeur of an Egyptian temple in its perfect state, when it served no less as a fortress and a palace for the sacerdotal caste than as a place for the solemn rites of religion.

* W. H. Bartlett, "The Nile Boat," p. 199.



TEMPLE OF EDFOU

The sanctity of the scene, however, is sadly impaired by a wretched village of "mud hovels swarming with ragged fellahs," which has sheltered itself among the gigantic ruins.

There are two temples at Edfou (the Apollinopolis Magna of the Greeks), one of which is of comparatively little importance. The propylon to the greater temple, already alluded to, is one of the finest existing monuments of Egyptian architecture.

Each of the sides is 100 feet long, 100 feet high, and 30 feet broad. Many of the figures sculptured on it are 30 feet in height, and executed with masterly vigour of conception and accuracy of execution.* In each division a staircase of one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty steps conducts the explorer into noble apartments situated at different elevations.

The first court, into which we pass through the propylon, is still entire, with its surrounding corridor supported by ranges of light Ptolemaic pillars, the flat roof serving equally for a promenade or "vantage-ground of defence." At the extremity of the court, and forming the vestibule of the temple itself, runs another and more magnificent corridor, the beautiful capitals of which are as bright with azure and green as when first from the painter's hand. The remainder of the building is so filled up with sand and débris that further explorations seem impossible.

We may therefore return—through fields waving with millet — to our dahabieh, and continue our voyage up the river.

* Hamilton, "Egyptiaca," pp. 88, 89.

VIII.

Silsileh, and Koum Ombos.

"Enclosed with shining rock."
MILTON.

THE Nile breaks through a remarkable defile at the pass of Hadjur Silsileh, or "the Rock of the Chain;" its banks consisting of lofty and abrupt precipices that descend to the margin of the waters, and pent them up in a very narrow channel. Here the voyager lands to explore the grottoes excavated in the face of the crag, some of which belong to a remote antiquity, and record in their hieroglyphic inscriptions the triumphs of the early Pharaohs over their Ethiopian enemies.* Of greater interest, however, are the Silsileh quarries of sandstone, whose vast excavations might lead one to suppose that the whole world had been supplied from this spot with building materials for its nobler edifices. They give one a keen idea of the industry and persistent toil of the Egyptians; for only generation after generation of diligent workmen could have accomplished such enormous works. For an extent of several miles the mountain has been cut, by the hand of man, into yawning chasms and lofty menac-

* W. H. Bartlett, "The Nile Boat," p. 200.

ing precipices, which, in their dimensions and picturesque variety of outline, seem to mimic the designs of nature. As the stone nearest the river bank is of a porous character, and not well adapted for architectural purposes, passages were cut through the useless strata into the very heart of the rock. Several of these artificial avenues are nearly half-a-mile in length, by 50 or 60 feet wide, and 80 deep. Many large masses remain as the workmen left them, and the marks of their tools—made three or four thousand years ago—are plainly visible. From the crosses painted in different places, it is supposed that the persecuted Christians afterwards sought shelter in these labyrinths; and very suggestive is this juxtaposition of the emblems of Christianity with the memorials of an earlier faith. The one is eternal, for it comes from the Divine; the other, as we see, was transient, though not inglorious, because created by human intellect.

On the western bank the excavations are less gigantic, but more interesting; and the traveller wanders amazed among a mass of pillars, grottoes, tablets, niches, statues, sculptures, and paintings. Here the victorious Pharaoh—Hor-em-heb, successor of Amenoph III.—rides down the vanquished Ethiopians, receives the trembling captives, or drags them by the hair, threatening them with instant execution. There we see him borne in a shrine on men's shoulders, with files of soldiers in attendance, and the lion, emblematic of his power, pacing beside the royal chariot. In another place, he receives the symbol of life from the supreme god.

The historian, observes Miss Martineau,* revels among such memorials as these. The invariable practice here of sculpturing the names and titles of the kings, and often of their chief officers, and the descriptions of the people conquered, and the names of the votaries as well as of their gods, makes research a self-rewarding effort. How would the English archæologist rejoice if such relics existed of the aborigines of his own country; or the classical antiquary, if equally permanent and accurate information had been graven on the rock to light up the dim uncertain annals of old Rome! But not less interesting is this written—this sculptured history—to the moralist and the poet. It shows how sacred a labour temple-building was considered, when the very quarries were dedicated to the gods. We cannot venture to doubt the sincerity of belief of the ancient Egyptians; and may be pardoned for wishing that religion made as intimate a part of our daily life as it did of theirs. Call it superstition, if you will; yet was it a superstition that inculcated a high morality, and nourished as true and vivid a conception of the Supreme as, perhaps, man ever attained without the help of a revelation from on high. The Egyptians looked upon their children as given by the gods; led them in bands to the temples, that at an early age they might worship and pray; invoked at their banquets the blessing of the Judge of all things; presented their triumphs and achievements as sacrifice to the celestial powers; and hallowed their great work of temple-building—which seems to have been the main

* Miss Martineau, "Eastern Life, Past and Present," i. 266.

purpose of their lives—by "making the very rocks holy which were to furnish the material." Here, at Silsileh, a great assembly of the gods accept the offerings of the kings. Savak is the deity of the place; but the god Nilus holds a higher rank than usual, either because the river here pours through the rocky pass with so much fulness and force, or because much of the stone cut for far-off temples was intrusted to the charge of Nilus for transport.

Some of the tablets are lettered with inscriptions of historical importance, and especially with a record of certain assemblies held in various years of the reign of the great Rameses. The object and nature of these assemblies have not yet been ascertained. Either they had a religious or a political character. All we know is, that they were held in the great halls of the temples, and were considered of such high importance, that the title of President of the Assemblies was bestowed upon the king alone on earth, and was supposed to be not unworthy of the gods in their own mysterious realm.*

Passing through the Silsileh defile, we emerge upon a broad and open valley, whose gently-ascending slopes are clothed with palm groves. Here is situated the village of Koum Ombos (or Kóm Umboo), supposed to represent the ancient capital of the Ombite Nome, or province, and visited by the traveller for the sake of its two ruined temples.

The façade of the principal one consists of a portico

* Sir Gardner Wilkinson, "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians," v. *in loc.*

KOUM OMBOS.

of fifteen columns, five in front, and three deep, thirteen of which are still standing. It was rebuilt by the Ptolemies on the site of an edifice which dated from an early part of the third period, and is dedicated to the god Savak, and to Arseris, the brother of Savak. The latter was god of light, and his colleague a local deity of the Sun. The hawk and the crocodile were their symbols.*

A common architectural device of the Egyptians may here be advantageously studied. They regularly diminished the size of their inner chambers, so as to give, from the entrance, the appearance of a longer perspective than really existed. They built on an ascending ground, disguising the ascent by flights of extremely shallow steps. The roof was constructed with a still greater descent, which was concealed by the introduction of deep architraves and large cornices. The sides were made to draw in, so that the appearance which a building exhibits on paper, when represented in perspective, the Egyptian temples had in reality. Thus the adytum, sanctuary or holy place, was invariably small; but to the worshippers, who looked on from the further chambers, it seemed not small, but remote; and this remoteness invested it with an air of awful solemnity. The effect, indeed, when viewed through a long vista of sculptured columns and painted walls, must have been singularly imposing; must have far exceeded any of the dramatic contrasts which obtain in the Roman Catholic ritual.

The other temple, built on an artificial platform at

* Hamilton, "Egyptiaca," p. 75.

the north-western angle of the enclosure, was erected in the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra (about 50 B.C.),* and dedicated to the goddess Isis or Athor, with whose visage the capitals of the columns are adorned. The sculptures on the walls are very numerous, and even now, after the lapse of nearly twenty centuries, retain their brilliancy of colouring. So extensive are the ruins of Koum Ombos, that it seems difficult to believe they could have been effected by any other agency than an earthquake; or that, at least, Nature began the destruction which human barbarism has completed.

* Hamilton, "Egyptiaca," pp. 74–76.

IX.

Assouan or Aswán: the ancient Syene.

"Amid the foaming breakers' silvery light,
Where yon rough rapids sparkle!"

MOORE.

THE approach to Assouan is through a scene of romantic beauty. The Nile, bending abruptly, broadens into a kind of bay, which is shut in by the green and lovely island of Elephantine, whence an early dynasty of Egyptian kings derived their name. The high bold rocks which rise on every hand seem like the boundaries of a lake. On the left, nestling under lofty crags, whose summit is crowned with ruins, lies the modern village of Assouan: in the distance, the yellow sandy hills are covered with remains of Saracenic architecture. To the right, the shattered walls of a convent mark the crest of a sandstone eminence; and all around, between the desert and the river, the palm-groves cluster in verdurous masses.

Some allusion may here be made to the infinite life that animates the banks of the Nile, and is all the more striking from its contrast with the monotonous dulness of the desert. The waters themselves teem with huge and quaint-looking fishes, among which

several species of Siluridæ may be recognized; myriads of flies and gnats fill the air with their humming; among the herbage glance to and fro the glittering lizards, snakes are twining, and innumerable insects slowly crawl. The low spits of sand which occasionally project into the river are crowded with wild-fowl; so that one would make a rare prize if one could suddenly enclose in a net all

> "These rich, restless wings that gleam
> Variously in the sun's bright beam"—

the sacred ibis, the stately heron, the purple Nile goose, and the snowy pelican. The very air, says an observant traveller,* is darkened and rustling with flocks of beautiful turtle doves, birds of paradise, hoopooes, and strange swallows; and, high over all, soar the eagle and the hawk on watch for the living, and the vulture scenting for the dead. Flocks of sheep and goats browse about each village; the bay of the wild dog echoes afar off; along the dusty highway stalks the much-enduring camel; and buffaloes perform unceasing gyrations in the sakías, or water-wheels, that irrigate the thirsty land.

The word Assouan is the Coptic *souan* or *suan*, an "opening," with the addition of the Arabic *el*, or "the," softened into *es* or *as*. It lies on the east branch of the Nile, near the frontier of Nubia, 110 miles south of Thebes, in lat. 24° 5′ 30″ north, and long. 32° 55′ east. Of old, this position was strategetically important; was the watch-tower on the frontier between Egypt and the south; the most

* Eliot Warburton, "The Crescent and the Cross," chap. ix.

commanding point near the First Cataract, which, though no very formidable obstacle to modern navigation, must have been a serious obstruction before the great sinking of the bed of the Nile. Syene, as it was called by the ancients, was the depôt of the merchandise which passed between the north and south. Here lay the quarries whence much of the Egyptian building stone—a peculiar kind of granite still known as *syenite*—was drawn. A Nilometer stood here, to record the rise of the great god Nilus. Temples at Elephantine ministered to the religious wants of strangers and natives. There was a garrison in the time of the Persians, and again in the days of the Greeks, and Roman and Saracenic fortifications lie in ruins on the heights around. Thus, on this frontier spot, the evidence is abundant that successive races prized it as the important Opening which its name declares it to be—the Opening where the fertilizing floods of the Nile broke into the land of Egypt.

The view from the environing rocks is very striking—a view of hill and water, wood and lowland; and beyond, the confused and blown heaps of the rolling sands of the desert. The river hurries past in a succession of rapid eddies and foaming whirls. In their midst lie various black-coloured islets, marking the boundary of the Cataract; and nearer at hand, and in a more tranquil reach of the stream, rises the beautiful Elephantine. Ruin, however, is written in gigantic letters on the entire scene. The island of Elephantine looks as if it had been ravaged by an earthquake, scarcely one stone being left upon

another, of all its once famous edifices. In a hollow of the wilderness lies the great cemetery, each grave with its memorial-tablet inscribed in Cufic letters. The hoary walls of the Saracenic fortress on the one hand, and of the Christian convent on the other, preach the same great lesson of mutability.

At a short distance from the village, on the opposite bank of the Nile, are situated the time-honoured Quarries of Syene. They probably furnished the chief materials for the colossal structures of Egypt. The excavations, says a modern traveller,* are on a scale proportionate to the vast works they were destined to construct, and the solid rocks have been hewn out like so much clay.

The wedge, that most ancient of building tools, was the potent instrument in rending each adamantine mass. The dimensions of the required block were marked out by wedges, which, being wetted, duly expanded, and the rock, split asunder, yielded up a column or a god. Here may be seen the grooves and the notches made by labourers who died thousands of years ago, in preparation for works which were never carried out. Here may be seen the idle or playful scratches which amused a leisure hour or a joyous mood. Here, too, may be seen a variety of rude inscriptions, referring to blocks hewn out, or commemorating the victories of the kings, as if the glad tidings of triumph awoke a feeling of national enthusiasm from Thebes to Syene. All seems, says Mr. Melly, as if it were the creation of yesterday; as if the artificers, called off by some emergency, had

* G. Melly, "Khartoum, and the Blue and White Niles."

but just left their mighty labour. Yonder lies an unpolished obelisk, ninety or a hundred feet long, and ten feet broad, waiting for those final touches which it shall never receive! * The excavations are said to have been arrested by the Persian Conquest, which swept, like a destroying simoom, over the face of Egypt. And so the huge columns moulder in the sand, and there is none to provide for their removal or completion. The old faith has vanished, and its shrines are the resort of curious pilgrims from remote lands which the worshippers never knew of.

Here the problem suggests itself to the observer, How were such stupendous masses removed to so great a distance as Thebes? The appliances employed for their transit must ever remain a mystery. Certain it is, that the task would prove of almost insuperable difficulty to modern engineers. It would seem that most, if not all, of the blocks were conveyed to their destination by land. But how? Herodotus relates that two thousand men were employed for three years in the removal of one block.† Yet the colossal structures of Thebes were mostly erected within a comparatively limited period, and consist of innumerable masses. How could men be

* Hamilton, "Egyptiaca," p. 105.

† Among the Egyptian paintings is the representation of a colossus drawn on a sledge by one hundred and seventy-two men, who are ranged in four rows of forty-three each. In one respect ancient and modern expedients were alike. An individual stands on a leg of the image, and claps his hands for a signal to the team of men to pull together. When the single piece of granite, weighing twelve hundred tons, which forms the pedestal to the equestrian statue of Peter the Great at St. Petersburgh, was drawn to its site, a drummer was placed on the top of the huge block to perform the same service.—*Quarterly Review*, No. ccxl., p. 430.

found, in a population generally estimated at five or six millions only, to toil in these quarries, to transport the material to distant sites, to build the temples and palaces, to design and embellish and perfect them, while all the time an advanced civilization made other demands upon labour, and wars had to be carried on, and extensive conquests made, and agriculture and commerce also claimed their thousands and tens of thousands?

The island of Elephantine is rich in architectural remains, though, unhappily, they are all in a sadly dilapidated condition. In the midst of a vast field of bricks, and fragments of baked earth, a column or two stand as a memorial of the ancient temple of Kneph, the good genius—he who, of all the Egyptian Pantheon, approaches nearest in his attributes to our ideas of the Supreme Divinity.* All the ornaments are accompanied by the serpent, symbolic of eternal and pre-eminent wisdom. A statue of red granite, with the Osiride emblems, has also escaped destruction; and the lower portion of the Nilometer. The upper portion was pulled down, some thirty years ago, to furnish building stone for an official's palace at Assouan. There is a granite gateway of the time of Alexander; and near it lie some slender and broken pillars, which, as one of them bears a sculptured cross, evidently belonged to a Christian temple. Other memorials of interest have rewarded the re-

* Some authorities contend that this temple was dedicated to Khnum, the god of the waters, and his colleagues, Amicis and Sate. It was founded by Amenoph III., and embellished by Rameses III. See Denon, "Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt," ii. 30-36; Hamilton, "Egyptiaca," &c.

search of travellers: numerous fragments of pottery bearing receipts in the Greek language for taxes paid by the farmers in the reigns of the Antonines; and part of a calendar recording the rise of the Dog-star in the time of Thothmes III. (1445 B.C.),—that is, three thousand three hundred and twelve years ago.

Elephantine (or Elephantina) was anciently called *Abu*, or the "Ivory Island," and was the depôt of the large traffic carried on in that costly product. From hence the Greek mercenaries in the pay of Psammetichus I. were despatched in search of Egyptian deserters; and in successive eras it was garrisoned by the Greeks, Persians, Romans, and Saracens. It gave the fifth dynasty of kings to the throne of Egypt.

From Assouan it is customary for the Nile voyager to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Island of Philæ, which marks the extreme boundary of Upper Egypt.

X.

The Island of Philæ.

The footprints of an elder race are here,
And memories of an heroic time,
And shadows of the old mysterious faith;
So that the isle seems haunted, and strange sounds
Float on the wind through all its ruined depths.

"By Him who sleeps in Philæ!"—such the oath
Which bound th' Egyptian's soul as with a chain
Imperishable. Ay, by him—by him—
The great Osiris, who lies slumbering here,
Lulled by the music of the flowing Nile.

Ages have gone, and creeds, and dynasties,
And a new order reigns o'er all the earth;
Yet still the mighty Presence keeps the isle—
Awful, serene, and grandly tranquil he,
With Isis watching—restless in her love!

W. H. D. A.

PHILÆ was called by the Egyptians *Menlak*, "the Place of the Cataract;" or *Menuab*, "the Abaton or Sanctuary." It is a small rock of granite, about 1000 feet long, and 200 feet broad. The oldest remains, which render it of such high interest to the traveller, are these:—A hypæthral, or roofless hall, built by Nectanebo I., about 377–367 B.C. The same monarch's name is recorded on the first propylon, where an entrance, dating from his reign, has been incorporated into buildings erected by one of the Ptolemies. Both these are dedicated

to the goddess Isis, who was worshipped at Philæ as Athor—the Egyptian Venus. There are, also, a small temple, or chapel, sacred to the god Nilus; and another, of comparatively modern date, to the Healer, Æsculapius. But the principal ruins are those of the great temple of Isis, overthrown by the Persians, but rebuilt by the Ptolemies. These consist of a shrine, or sekos; a pronaos—the area through which the cell was approached; an open portico; and two pylons (pyla) or gateways. Both the latter were constructed by Ptolemy Philometer and Ptolemy Lathyrus; the colonnade was principally the work of the Roman Emperor Tiberius; while the graceful little temple, vulgarly known as Pharaoh's Bed, belongs to the reign of Trajan (100 A.D.) *

Beginning from the southern shore, the traveller first notices (on the west) a pillar of sandstone, whence a colonnade extends, continuous on this side, to the great propyla. The thirty-six columns all differ from each other in the sculpture of their capitals, representing the indigenous vegetation of Egypt —palms, tobacco, water-plants, and acacias. Some of the shafts bear hieroglyphical inscriptions, and some are plain. The intercolumnar screens, and the walls behind the columns, are richly embellished with hieroglyphs. The eastern colonnade is unfinished, and numbers only sixteen columns. The part next the river is in ruins; and here stands the temple of Æsculapius already referred to. Its Greek dedication bears the name of the fifth Ptolemy.†

* Sir Gardner Wilkinson, "Modern Egypt," ii. 295-303.
† Madox, "Excursions in Egypt, the Holy Land," &c., i. 360-375.

RUINS AT PHILÆ.

The traveller now sees before him the great propylon, with its massive pyramidal towers, including the ancient gateway of Nectanebo I., distinguished by the old Egyptian emblem of the winged globe. A smaller entrance, on the left hand, leads to a temple celebrating the birth of Horus—the Greek Harpocrates. This temple is built apart, and surrounded by pillars bearing the head of Isis for their capitals. On the opposite side of the area, or pronaos, within the great propylon, is arranged a row of unfinished chambers.

Crossing the pronaos, and passing through the gate of the inner and smaller propylon, we enter a court containing ten colossal columns. They support the roof, which covers half the court; both the ceiling and the columns glowing with freshly-radiant sculptures in a variety of colours, while the compartments are divided by decorative and emblematic borders. Each pillar measures ten feet in circumference. The ceiling is of a bright azure, sprinkled with golden stars. The walls are wreathed with reeds and lotus; and among the herbage may be seen the wild-duck and the ibis.

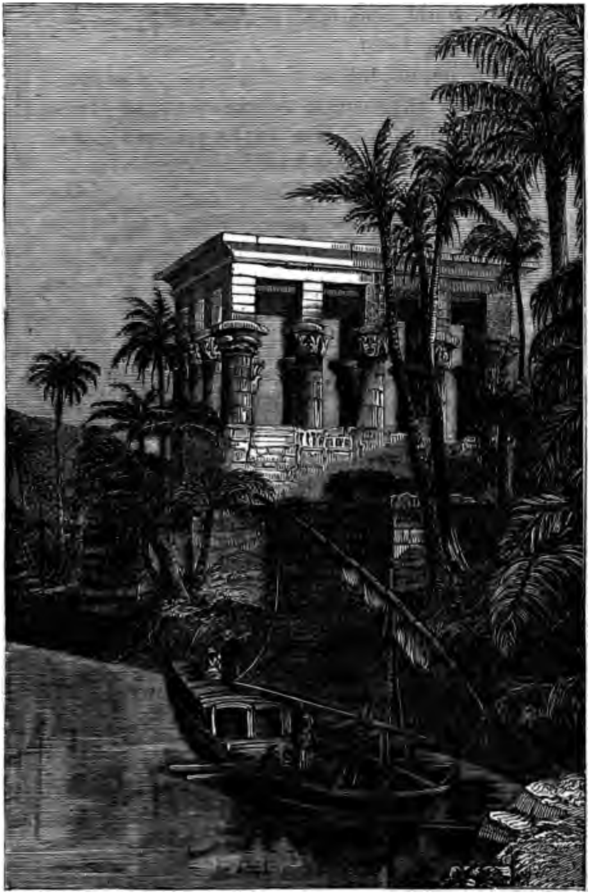
To this court succeeds a corridor, which leads round the corner of the next chamber to an entrance to some vaults. Beyond lie two chambers, with doors opposite one another. Instead of one adytum or sanctuary, there are two; and over the western lies another apartment, secluded and difficult of access, which represents the death and resurrection of Osiris; how he was embalmed, how he was ferried over the Silent River, how he was welcomed by the spirits of

COURT AT PHILÆ.

the other world, and how he was finally invested as Judge of the Dead.

Such are the antiquities of Philæ; a spot as sacred to the ancient Egyptians as Jerusalem to the Jew, or Mecca to the Moslem. The young reader will wonder, perhaps, why so great a sanctity attached to this little island-rock of the Nile. We will attempt to offer a brief explanation; an explanation which will require us to touch upon the peculiar history and office of the god Osiris. This was the Supreme Divinity, in whom generation after generation believed, long ago, in the palmy days of ancient Egypt —believed with a sincere and solemn faith—to whom they raised temple and shrine, and by whom they expected to be judged and rewarded in the future world. Their faith may have been mistaken, and their god a shadow, but as the faith of a highly intellectual and earnest race of men, it claims to be regarded by modern writers with some degree of reverence. This is not claiming, as Miss Martineau remarks, an equal value for their objects of belief and ours. God forbid that we should! We are not referring to the greater elevation, purity, and promise of Christianity as compared with the creed of ancient Egypt. We do but ask our readers to remember that the old Egyptians *had* a faith—not a superstition—not a mass of silly and unmeaning fables, but a *faith*, to which they might refer the loftiest ideas of a lofty order of intellect, and in which they might repose the affections of their common human heart.*

* Sir Gardner Wilkinson, "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, v.;" Bunsen, "Egypt's Place in the World's History;" Miss Martineau, "Eastern Life," i. and ii.



TEMPLE OF ISIS AT PHILÆ.

Osiris, or, as some authorities write it, Asiris, or Hysiris ("many-eyed"), is reputed to have been the son of Seb (or Saturn) by Nu (or Rhea). He was the brother and husband of Isis, by whom he had Horus, and in some instances seems identified with the Sun or the Creative Power. The later myths record that he became king of the Egyptians, to whom he taught agriculture and the art of making wine; that he afterwards travelled over the world, everywhere extending the influence of civilization; and that, meanwhile, his kingdom was ruled over by Isis, who repressed the ambitious designs of Typhon, the brother of Osiris. Typhon, however, persuaded seventy-two persons to join him in a scheme for the murder of his brother, which on the return of the latter was successfully carried out; but in the shadow-world he revived, and the important office was assigned to him of judging the dead and ruling over the regions of the blessed.

His names were numerous, like his attributes. He was called Onnophris, or "the meek-hearted;" the Manifester of Good, because he appeared on earth to benefit mankind; Lord of Lords; Lord of the East; King of the Gods; but in his most sacred and mysterious office, and as superior to every other deity, he was never mentioned. When Herodotus has described the lamentations and self-chastisements which formed part of the sacrificial rites at the feast of Isis, he says that it is not permitted him to tell in whose honour these took place. He invariably speaks of Osiris by allusion, and never by name. In the earlier and purer days of the Egyptian worship, Osiris represented the Universal Goodness of the Supreme

Being, all whose several attributes were personified as separate deities for the common people. It was believed that he quitted his celestial throne and assumed a human form, but without becoming human, for the benefit of mankind; that on earth he was vanquished by the Power of Evil; that he rose up again to conquer Evil by his resurrection; and that he was then appointed Judge of the Dead and Lord of the heavenly region.

He was adored by all Egypt, not only for his benefits to man, but because he was the only manifestation on earth of the One Supreme God. For this reason he was made superior to the eight great gods, after whom he ranked on other accounts. It must always remain a mystery how the Egyptians supposed his manifestation to have taken place in the form of humanity without adopting its nature.

But when we speak of Osiris as the only manifestation of the One God upon earth, we mean the only manifestation made by a supernatural power. For, otherwise, all living beings, in the creed of the Egyptians, as in the philosophy of Pantheism, emanated from the Source and Centre of Life.* The very worm beneath the sod, the insect that sported its little hour on a blade of grass, no less than the mighty hippopotamus or huge behemoth, proceeded from the Fountain of Universal Existence. It was from Egypt, in all probability, that Pythagoras derived that doctrine of the metempsychosis, which afterwards spread through the civilized world. It accounts for the pecu-

* Sir Gardner Wilkinson, "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians," iv. 187–189.

liar observances with regard to animals which prevailed in Egypt. As Porphyry observes, it was the teaching of the Egyptians that the divinity entered not only the human body, but that of the beast; and that the soul, while on earth, dwelt not in man alone, but passed in a measure through all animals.

But if all life was thus linked with its creative principle, Osiris, nevertheless, was the only one of the sons of the Supreme who had revealed him to man, and therefore was justly worshipped above them all. As the highest manifestation of his goodness, he was naturally identified with the peculiar blessings of old Egypt—with the annual overflow of the Nile, and the consequent fertility of the land. This suggested the legend that his body was deposited in the Cataract, whence he arose once every year to enrich the glad Earth with his measureless bounty. Thus he came to be called the founder of agriculture; or, more poetically, the eldest-born of Time and cousin to the Day.

As Osiris was cousin to the Day, the kinsman of Light and Morning, so his murderer, Typhon, was the god of the Eclipse, of Darkness and the Shadow,—that is, the personification of Evil. He was in hateful league with Antæ, or the Desert; a myth which, in the course of ages, originated that wide-spread idea of an eternal struggle between the powers of evil and good, which we trace in the Ormuzd and Ahrimanes of the Persians, as well as in other Oriental creeds.

Isis was the sister and wife of Osiris. The Egyptians called her Hes, daughter of *Seb* or Chronos, and *Nu* or Rhea. On the monuments she is variously styled the Mistress of Heaven, the Regent of the

Gods, the Eye of the Sun. She would seem to have personified the Earth, though at a later time her attributes, under her name of Athor, somewhat resembled those of the Greek Venus; and her worship was accompanied by certain mysterious rites known only to the initiated. A veil always hung before her shrine, which, said the well-known inscription, "None among mortals have ever lifted up;" typifying, perhaps, the inscrutable course and deep secrets of Nature. Sometimes she represented the land of Egypt, as Osiris did its fertilizing river, the Nile. She was also his colleague in the solemn judgment of the dead, and in this office suggested to the Greeks their Hekle or Hecate. Her infant, Horus, or Childhood—the emblem of reproduction—was also adopted by the poets and priests of Hellas, who converted him into Harpocrates, the god of silence, with his finger ever pressed to his lips.*

Such were the deities to whose mysterious worship Philæ—the Holy Island—was solemnly dedicated; and it still seems haunted, even in this utilitarian age, by the presence of the mighty triad. The whole island is not above fifty acres in size, but, as Warburton remarks, it is richer perhaps in objects of interest than any spot of similar extent in the world. And just as the great allegorical religion of Egypt has a deeper significance and a broader meaning than the fanciful myths of Greece, so has Philæ, for the student of philosophy, a higher interest and a stronger charm than the fabled birth-place of the Cyprian goddess or the oak-groves of Dodona.

* Sir Gardner Wilkinson, *ut ante*, iv. 317, 321, 367, 384, *et in loc.*

XI.

The Cataract.

"The Nile! the Nile! I hear its gathering roar,
No vision now, no dream of ancient years—
Throned on the rocks, amid the watery war,
The king of floods, old Homer's Nile, appears."
LORD LINDSAY.

WHILE directing the reader's attention to the antiquities of Syene and Elephantine, we considered it convenient to include in the survey those of the island of Philæ; but the reader must bear in mind that while the former are *below*, the latter is *above* the First Cataract. To continue our river voyage, therefore, we must return to Assouan, and prepare for our ascent of the rapids.

Just beyond lies Birbé, a sort of river-port for the upper Nile, where it is worth while for the traveller to land and climb the neighbouring heights, if he have any taste for the picturesque. From these he will obtain a view of Philæ, which will long live in his memory, and often, in after-times, rise upon him like a vision of the beautiful. Mr. Warburton * declares that no dreamer of the old mystical days, when beauty, knowledge, and power were realized on earth, ever pictured to himself a scene of wilder grandeur

* Eliot Warburton, "The Crescent and the Cross."

and more perfect loveliness. All around, vast masses of gloomy rocks are piled upon one another in fantastic confusion; some of them, as it were, skeletons

DISTANT VIEW OF PHILÆ.

of pyramids; others requiring only a few strokes of giant labour to shape them into colossal statues that might have startled the Anakim. And looking upon these strange rocky forms, the traveller will have no difficulty in understanding the origin of Egyptian sculpture—the artist was inspired by the grotesque or sublime conceptions of Nature herself. Here spreads a "deep drift of silvery sand," framed in a ring of verdure and purple blossom; there the flowering acacia blends its drooping branches with a grove of palms; and yonder, through foliage and rock, glows the lake-like expanse of the Nile, with the

Sacred Island in the midst, like "a precious stone set in the silver sea." Above its green and pillared banks, green to the water's edge, tall pyramids aspire, and shapely columns of proportions apt; towers, and terraces, and feathery palms. And in the distance gleams the winding river; while the whole landscape, embosomed in a deep and tranquil mountain-valley, seems like a part of Fairy-land, where only the spirits of the past—the world's "gray forefathers"—should hold communion.

The ascent of the Cataract, when the waters are low, is a matter of difficulty rather than of danger. In fact, as already stated, it is not a cataract, but a rapid, caused by the sudden compression of the river into a narrow rocky channel, obstructed by numerous masses of crag and stone, which vex the waters into many a swirling eddy. To drag the boat against the impetuous stream, and to avoid these little islands of rock, the assistance is secured of an important official, known as the Rais of the Cataract, who brings with him from forty to fifty followers, swart, athletic Nubians, all naked but for a white turban on their heads, and a cincture of cotton round their waists. Of these, a portion take possession of the dahabieh, while the remainder are posted at those points on the lofty bank where their services will be more immediately required.

The commencement of the Cataract has been expressively described as a complete archipelago of granite rocks, some red, others black, and all shining in the sun, as though highly polished, with various torrents rushing between them in all directions.

These rocks are of the most extraordinary forms; now awful, now grotesque; they look as ancient as the Earth itself—the very skeletons of the antediluvian world. On the western bank the sands of the Great Desert, yellow as gold, and broken by the action of the wind into rolling waves, descend to the water's edge, interspersed with great masses of black basalt; on the east, crag rises above crag in such chaotic confusion that one can only suppose the scene to have resulted from some volcanic explosion.*

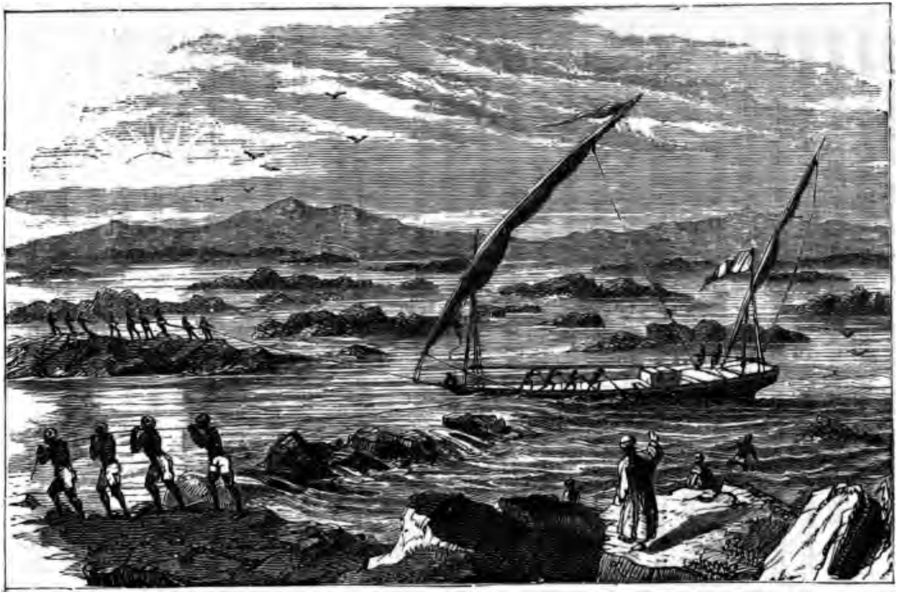
The northerly breeze which almost always prevails in this part of Egypt, carries our boat through the rocky archipelago to the base of the Cataract, and we make fast to the rocks while preparations are made for our ascent. The scene now commends itself to the artist's eye:—enormous masses of dark stone lie around in every direction; the foaming river whirls and scurries through every fissure and ravine; innumerable swarthy demon-like figures—like those in "Don Giovanni"—hurry to and fro among the rocks, upon the sands, upon the deck of the dahabieh, or amid the seething waters; the Rais, with his long robes floating in the wind, takes his stand on a vantage-point where he can overlook the whole transaction; a stout English rope is made fast to the mainmast; the Nubians cling to it with a vice-like grasp; "Yallough! Wallah!" a mighty shout, and away we go up the hill of water which forms the first stage of the Cataract.

It is over! and our amphibious attendants take a quiet breathing pause. The Rais gesticulates, "Yallough! Wallah!" and again they set to work. Now

* Mrs. Romer, "Temples and Tombs of Egypt," &c., i. 169, 170.

we hang suspended on the very ridge where the waters seem to hesitate ere they plunge below; another pull; a long pull, and a strong one; "Yallough!" one more pull, and the second fall is safely passed. After a short space we move on, over a quiet reach of the stream, to the third and most difficult stage of the rapid, where the Nile hurls the whole volume of its waters between two towering cliffs.

Now, indeed, the Rais appears fully equal to the responsibilities of his position. He flings off his encumbering robes, and stands forth stripped of everything but his drawers; his turban even thrown aside, and the long Mussulman tuft of hair that crowns his shaven head "floating like a horse-tail in the wind." His gestures and his ejaculations are ceaseless and violent. His followers seem animated with Herculean vigour. They shout and they strain; they dart hither and thither; they jump upon the rocks; they leap into the waters; now they fend off the quivering boat from some dangerous crag; now they tug lustily at the straining rope; the cries of "Yallough! Wallah!" are redoubled, and replied to from the shore by shouts of "Haybe sah!"—"God help you!"—a minute, and another—we are half buried in foam and spray; and now, hurrah! we have surmounted the dreaded Cataract, and ride triumphantly on the tranquil river. We bid adieu to the Rais and his trusty men, take our own crew on board, and with swelling sails glide through the portal of gloomy rocks that shuts in Ethiopia from the world. Egypt is left behind us; that strange and mysterious land of art, religion, and literature; the land of Osiris and Isis;



FIRST CATARACT OF THE NILE.

the land of the pyramid and the sphinx; of Memphis, and Thebes, and Heliopolis; the mother of countless nations; the fountain of Greek philosophy and science; which inspired the lore of Athens and the subtle policy of Crete; which, long before Greece and Rome had a name and a habitation, possessed all the graces of intellectual life, all the secrets of a penetrating wisdom;—Egypt, the cradle of human history and human knowledge, whose solemn memories surround it with an imperishable glory!

> "There shrines and palaces and towers,
> (Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
> Resemble nothing that is ours."

All seems to have outlived Time, to belong to Eternity; for the Past stretches back to such dim and remote ages, that we take no count of years and epochs, and in the maze of speculation fancy that whenever Time was, so was Egypt; and as long as Time shall endure, so long shall Egypt be!

We have passed the First Cataract, and have entered Nubia; the Sacred Island remains with us now only as a dream; the river grows narrower and more rapid; the cliffs, of a dark red, encroach more and more upon its channel; rich leafy glens open up wild glimpses of the Nubian Desert; a tropic sky burns overhead; the hot rays are thrown back from the gleaming waters and the naked rocks like blazing swords; and right glad is the traveller when he comes to an anchor in the cool evening off the large town of Kalabshé! Here, then, we may find it convenient to put together a few geographical notes upon the country we have just entered.

XII.

Nubia.

> "Where rippling wave, and dashing oar,
> The midnight chant attend;
> Or whispering palm-leaves from the shore
> With midnight-silence blend."
>
> REV. J. KEBLE.

THE name "Nubia" seems to have been derived from the Egyptian and Coptic *noub*, or "gold," which we still find extant in the Wady Nouba, a valley on the frontiers of Dongola. It was known to the ancients as Æthiopia, though the exact limits comprised under that appellation cannot now be determined. Generally speaking, it included all the west bank of the Nile from Meroë to the "Great Bend," and was supposed to be a happy and fertile region, peculiarly favoured by the gods. In the "Iliad," Thetis informs Achilleus that

> "Ζεὺς γαρ ἐπ' ὠκεανον μετ' ἀμύμονας Αἰθιοπηας."*

> "The sire of gods and all th' ethereal train,
> On the warm limits of the furthest main,
> Now mix with mortals, nor disdain to grace
> The feasts of Ethiopia's blameless race."
>
> POPE.

The ignorance which prevailed in reference to all

* Homer, "Iliad," lib. i., v. 123.

the African interior was favourable to the growth of such poetic conceptions; but a closer acquaintance with the Nubian deserts scarcely induces the modern traveller to acquiesce in the ancient fables. The only fertile portions are the great plains in the immediate vicinity of the Nile, which undoubtedly, in former times, inundated, and consequently enriched, a wider extent of country than it does at present.

Modern Nubia may be considered to extend from Philæ, above the First Cataract, to Sennaar, in 18° south latitude. It thus comprises a kind of valley or hollow, bounded on the west by the sands of the Great Desert, south by the uplands of Abyssinia, north by Egypt, and east by the Arabian Gulf. Under the Pharaohs it was called Kesh, or Cush, and was ruled by a viceroy, entitled Prince of Cush or Ethiopia, until it regained its independence and was governed by its native rulers. These appear to have invaded and subjugated Egypt, and to have extended their sway from Meroë to Syene, which marked the limits of the possessions of the Ptolemies and the Romans. Meroë became the seat of a powerful empire, and the emporium of the commerce of India, Libya, Carthage, Arabia, and Egypt. A severe blow was dealt to its prosperity by the Persian Cambyses, who conquered it about 530 B.C. After the destruction of Thebes, however, the inhabitants fled to Meroë, which again waxed strong and rich, and assumed a markedly Egyptian character. In the reign of Augustus it was captured by the Romans, and we read of one of its sovereigns, a Queen Candace, as his tributary. Its decay appears to have been rapid, for even

as early as the time of Nero its site was only known by the ruins of its once splendid temples and palaces.

After the Moslem conquest of Egypt, Nubia was invaded by the Arabs, who spread themselves over its valleys and plains, and now consist of five principal tribes: the Djowabere, El Gharbye, the Kenons, the Koreish, and the Djaafere. Further to the south, in a fertile country, dwell the Berbers or Barabra; then come the Ababde and the warlike Sheygya; while from Dongola and Sennaar, a Negro state, the people are called Noubas, a mixture of Arab and Nigritic blood.

The Nubians, as a whole, are a more athletic and vigorous race than the Egyptians. They are honest, courageous, and independent. The women are more virtuous, while they are also more beautiful; the face being a fine oval, the eyes dark and expressive, the complexion a glowing bronze, the figure light and elegant. They possess, too, the singular charm of a very sweet and plaintive voice. The virgins wear nothing but a leather girdle round the waist, and a blue or white scarf dependent from the back of their heads. The matrons clothe themselves in a long and loose blue robe. Few of the young men wear any covering except a cincture round their loins. They carry a knife, slung in a sheath to the left shoulder; and a club of ebony, or a long spear, ornamented with the skin of serpents or crocodiles. Their hair glistens in the sun with the castor-oil which they very freely use.

They eat little animal food, and their staple diet is the fruit of the doum palm, dates, tamarinds, and

maize. They breed vast quantities of poultry. The principal products of the soil are aloes, musk, civet, many valuable gums, maize, tamarinds, myrrh, frankincense, senna. They also trade in skins, cotton, coffee, tobacco, ostrich feathers, ebony, ivory, gold dust, and salt. They have no currency of their own; glass beads, coral, cotton, tobs or shirts, and samoor or cloth, they receive as money; but the coins of Europe and Egypt are never refused. They sell their grain by the handful, and measure their cloth from the elbow to the fingers. They plait skilfully, but are ignorant of the use of looms. Their houses are low huts of stone or sun-dried clay. Their musical instrument is a kind of five-stringed banjo or guitar; and their music, as in almost all savage nations, is very sad.

Nubia is traversed by the Nile in many windings. It forms five cataracts within its bounds; receives its principal tributary, the Atbara or Tacazze; and at Khartoum, the two branches of the Bahr-el-Abiad, or White Nile, and the Bahr-el-Azrek, or Blue Nile, unite in one grandly rolling stream.

The principal towns are Khartoum, with a population of 40,000; El Obeid, in Kordafan, with 20,000; Shendi, above the junction of the Atbara, a large and prosperous market for cattle, senna, cotton, and grain; New Dongola; and Derr.

Nubia belongs to the viceroyalty of Egypt. It was conquered by Ismael Pasha, second son of Mehemet Ali, in 1820–22. He swept over the country like a destructive simoom, burning and ravaging the crops and villages, until his terrible career was cut

short by a fearful death. He had insulted a native chief—the Melek of Shendi—who took advantage of his distance from the main body of his army, to surround his hut with piles of straw, and, setting them on fire, burnt to death the pasha and his suite. Mehemet Ali's revenge was signal. He burnt all the inhabitants of the village nearest to his son's funeral pyre, and cut off the right hands of five hundred men besides.*

* Malte Brun, "Géographie Universelle;" "Nubia and Abyssinia" (Edin. Cab. Lib.); Mrs. Romer, "Temples and Tombs of Egypt, Nubia, &c."

XIII.

From Philæ to Abou-Simbel.

> "Here Desolation keeps unbroken Sabbath,
> 'Mid caves and temples, palaces and sepulchres;
> Ideal images in sculptured forms,
> Thoughts hewn in columns, or in caverned hill,
> In honour of their deities and their dead."
>
> JAMES MONTGOMERY.

THE first five miles after leaving Philæ, the voyager's course is south by east, then it turns towards the west, and finally resumes the former direction. He sees little to invite his attention until he reaches Debodeh, a village situated on the left bank, where the remains of a small temple may be seen.

Here the Nile flows in a steady and copious stream, for the most part washing the base of the eastern and western mountains; but wherever the inundation has deposited a thin stratum of soil upon the rocks, or has accumulated mounds of sand and mud, the Nubian cultivates such spots, and plants them with the universal date-tree. Thus a succession of little hamlets and water-wheels, for the one is never seen without the other, greets the eye on both sides as the traveller ascends the Nile Valley.

At Kalabshé, where we resume our voyage, stands

one of the largest and most perfect temples in Nubia. Its remains consist of an abutment of masonry, rising above the bank of the river, at about 180 feet from the front, to which there is a paved approach. On each side of the pavement appears to have stood a row of sphinxes, one of which remains, but is headless; and at its extremity a flight of steps led to a terrace 36 feet broad, crowned by two pyramidal masses, 18 or 20 feet thick, with a gateway between them—the whole forming a façade of not less than 110 feet. Inside, there is a court of about 40 feet, which must originally have had a colonnade linking the portico to the propylon.* The former consists of four massive pillars, attached for half their height to a wall, raised in the centre to form an entrance. Its front is plain, but the well-known emblem of the winged globe surmounts the gateway. It is divided by a lateral wall from a group of nine chambers, three of which are embellished with the usual hieroglyphical and allegorical figures, in colours still fresh and brilliant.

This is not truly an Egyptian temple. It was commenced in the reign of Augustus, and carried on by his successors, though never completed. It bears everywhere, however, the *impress* of the old Egyptian art, and shows that the Roman architects and colourists possessed a fine faculty of imitation. The largest temple in Nubia, the Christians afterwards laid hands upon it, and a saint and several halos are strangely conspicuous among the Pagan decorations of one of the inner chambers. For the rest, it is "a heap of magnificent ruin;" magnificent for costliness

* Dr. Richardson, "Travels along the Mediterranean," &c.

and vastness, but not for a pure and refined taste. Its builders could not enter into the higher mysteries of the old Egyptian worship.

At the rock-temple of Beyt-el-Wellee, two miles from Kalabshé, we once more find ourselves face to face with the genuine early art. It is full of the glory of the great Rameses.* Not that it is dedicated to Ra, but to Amen-ra; not to the orb of light, life, and day, but to the Spiritual Sun—the universal centre of Existence—the Unknown and Unutterable—the God of Gods. And with him is joined Kneph, or Knuph, the ram-headed god, who, in conjunction with Phtah, or Artistic Intellect, infuses life into organized beings, animates and inspires the material clay. But this little temple rests under the burden of yet another deity, the virgin goddess Anouké, the goddess of Home and Purity. We have here a significant triad:—Amen-ra, Kneph-Phtah, and Anouké; the Source of life, life made manifest, and life purified by home-joys and home-feelings.

We approach the cave-entrance between quarried rocks covered with remarkable sculptures. On one side sits Rameses enthroned, receiving the costly tribute and servile homage of the conquered Ethiopians, among whom may be recognized, for they are named, the Prince of Cush and his two children. There are oxen and gazelles, lions and antelopes, cameleopards, apes, elephants' teeth, quaint gorgeous fans, bags of gold, and heaps of ostriches' eggs;

* Harriet Martineau, "Eastern Life," i. 232. See also Dr. Richardson, *ut antè*.

Ethiopia has poured out all her wealth to secure the victor's clemency. Proceed a few steps further, and you see the battle-scene, which was the prelude to this triumph: it glows with rude vigorous life: the foe is flying; a wounded chief is borne aloft by his warriors; Rameses bends his bow as he sweeps along in his mighty chariot; a Nubian peasant boy flings dust upon his head, lamenting over his country's downfall. Turn to the other side, and your eye fastens upon other pictures of the storm and the strife—all tending to the glorification of the great sovereign who erected this temple as a thanksgiving for his victories and a monument to his fame.

The temple itself contains two chambers only; the outer court, and the adytum, or holy place. The walls, as usual, are covered with hieroglyphs and pictures. A Mohammedan hermit is said to have made his abode here, and probably he defaced much of the fine Egyptian handiwork.*

At Dendour stands a Romano-Egyptian temple, comparatively of little interest. It is sacred to the triad—Osiris, Horus, and Isis; and in the sacred place you see nothing but a tablet, with a sculpture of Isis upon it, and a few hieroglyphic signs. In a grotto, excavated in the rock behind, yawns a burial-pit.

Of far greater interest is the next place at which our dahabieh comes to an anchor—Ghirsché Housseyn, Guerf Hassan, or Garf Hoseyn, the ancient Tutzis. It is one of the strangest and most eëry spots

* Sir. G. Wilkinson, "Modern Egypt and Thebes," ii. 310–313.

in Nubia. To reach it, the traveller, on landing, crosses a breadth of corn-field, and then a strip of yellow sandy desert. Lo, before him, a tall cliff, and in the face of it the propylon of a superb temple! It looks like the portals to a subterranean palace of the Genii. The shadow of a remote antiquity is upon it. Far back, in the palmy days of Pharaonic Egypt, it was hewn out of the rock—in the reign of the great Rameses; who dedicated it to Phtah, the Lord of Truth, the God of creative or artisan Intellect, and the Maker of the Universe, and sculptured here his symbols—the scarabæus, whose ball of earth, the depository of its eggs, affords an apt image of the inhabitable globe—and the frog, which typifies the embryo of the human species. Ghirsché Housseyn, as well as Memphis, was formerly named after this deity—Phthahei, or Thyphthah.*

The whole of the temple, except part of the portico, is within the rock. The portico consists of five square columns on each side, which are hewn out of the rock, with a row of circular ones in front, constructed of several blocks. Before each of the square pillars stands a colossal statue of sandstone about 18 feet high, holding a flail in one hand, the other hanging down. These are Osirides, or male figures, with the high sphinx-helmet on their heads, and narrow beards under their chins; the shoulders covered with hieroglyphical inscriptions. A large gate opens from the portico into the pronaos, which measures 45 feet square, and contains two

* Sir G. Wilkinson, "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians," iv. 250.

TEMPLE AT DENDOUR.

rows of three huge columns, and colossal Osirides. Their workmanship is rude, but the whole has a very impressive effect. "Accustomed as I had been," says Burckhardt,* "to the grandeur of Egyptian temples, I was, nevertheless, struck with admiration on entering this gloomy pronaos, and beholding these immense figures standing in triumph before me. On the side walls are four recesses or niches, in each of which are three statues of the natural size, representing the different symbolical male and female figures which are seen on the walls of the temples of Egypt. The centre figures are generally clothed in a long dress, while the others are naked. All these, as well as the colossi, are covered with a thick coat of stucco, and had once been painted: they must then have had a splendid appearance. A door leads from the pronaos into the cella, in the middle of which are two massy pillars, and on either side a small apartment, which was probably a place of sepulture: on the floor of each are high stone benches, which may have served for supporting mummies, or perhaps as tables for embalming the bodies deposited in the temple."

The groups in the recesses consist of Ra, or the Sun, in the centre; and, perhaps, Anouké and Athor as his supporters. The temple extends 130 feet into the rock. Its general appearance, as Mrs. Romer remarks, when the traveller enters the excavated parts never visited by the rays of the sun, is singularly solemn and imposing.† The fitful light flung upon the stupendous pillars and colossal statues by

* Burckhardt, "Travels in Nubia," pp. 99, 100.

† Mrs. Romer, "Temples and Tombs of Egypt and Nubia," i. 234.

the torches which the Nubian attendants bear in their dusky hands, gives a weird and unearthly colouring to the whole scene; and it is still further intensified by the multitude of bats which, scared from their dark retreats by the unwelcome blaze, flit to and fro like malignant demons.

On leaving this rock-temple of Ghirsché Housseyn, the traveller will not fail to wonder at the vast achievements of a people who, without gunpowder to blast, or any of the appliances of modern engineers, could nevertheless excavate in the mountain-side so magnificent a sanctuary for their gods as this! Surely we cannot afford, with all our civilization, to despise the race of the old architect-priests and priest-kings of Egypt.

The next place at which we stop is Dakkeh, standing in solitary grandeur in the centre of a wild and dreary desert. But in the distance lies a patch of cultivated land, and a small Nubian village stands near the river-bank. This is the furthest point to the south, according to Champollion, where any monuments were built, or, more correctly speaking, reconstructed, by the Ptolemies and the Cæsars, whose sway, it seems evident, did not extend beyond Ibreem. The temple here was commenced by Eugamenes, the most famous of the Ethiopian kings of Egypt; it was continued by the Greek Euergetes, and his two immediate successors; the Roman emperor Augustus contributed to its embellishment; but it was never completed. Eugamenes dedicated it to Thoth, the god of intellect and the arts—the

Trismegistus of the later magicians—and his emblem, the ibis, with the hawk sacred to Ra, is sculptured on the walls of the ancient *adytum*. There are also painted here the figures of gods and kings, the water-plants of the god Nilus, and other decorative devices, —in blue, and green, and red,—still wonderfully clear and vivid. The chambers erected by the Ptolemies have some modern decorations blended with the ancient symbols, such as the Greek caduceus — the serpent-wand of Mercury — the cithara or harp—and the olive-wreath. Here, too, are the daubs perpetrated by Coptic Christians: saints, with "huge wry faces, and flaring glories over their heads."

The traveller can ascend to the summit of the propylon by a winding flight of sixty-nine steps. The panorama spread out before him is somewhat monotonous, but grand in its monotony: the rolling sands of the Nubian Desert stretching far away into the warm soft haze of a tropical horizon, the blue riband-like course of the Nile, the strip of verdure on either bank, and the groves of palms which serve to relieve the landscape.

"These propyla," says Miss Martineau,* "were the watch-towers and bulwarks of the temples in the old days when the temples of the deities were the fortifications of the country. If the inhabitants had known early enough the advantage of citadels and garrisons, perhaps the Shepherd race might never have possessed the country; or would at least have found their conquest of it more difficult than, according to Manetho,

* Harriet Martineau, "Eastern Life," i. 219, 220.

they did. 'It came to pass,' says Manetho (as Josephus cites him), 'I know not how, that God was displeased with us; and there came up from the east, in a strange manner, men of an ignoble race, who had the confidence to invade our country, and easily subdued it by their power, without a battle. And when they had our rulers in their hands, they burnt our cities, and demolished the temples of the gods, and inflicted every kind of barbarity upon the inhabitants, slaying some, and reducing the wives and children of others to slavery.' It could scarcely have happened," remarks Miss Martineau, "that these Shepherds, 'of an ignoble race,' would have captured the country 'without a battle,' and laid hands on the rulers, if there had been such citadels as the later built temples, and such watch-towers and bulwarks as these massive propyla. Whenever I went up one of them, and looked out through the loop-holes in the thick walls, I felt that these erections were for military full as much as religious purposes. Indeed, it is clear that the ideas were scarcely separable, after war had once made havoc in the Valley of the Nile. As for the non-military purposes of these propyla, they gave admission, through the portal in the centre, to the visitors to the temple, whether they came in the ordinary way, or in the processions which were so imposing in the olden times."

These propyla were also used as observatories, whence the priests watched the starry face of the tropical heaven; and from their summits, on days of festal pomp or religious ceremony, would be unfolded the mystic banners blazoned with hieroglyphic sym-

bols. Those priests of old well understood the truth, that, for the mass of mankind, Imagination is the portal of Faith, and knew how to stimulate the heart by appealing to the eye. The forms and rites of their worship were not less splendid than mystical. There was the shrine of the deity borne aloft by shaven and white-robed *flamens;* then came flags with the emblematic figures of the god or hero embroidered on their folds; and long trains of suppliants followed, with red oxen, fruits and cakes, turtle-doves and incense, as offerings. The king, himself the arch-priest and visible representation of the Supreme, would be there in all the splendour of Eastern state; and crowds of warriors, with their bows and spears, would enliven the scene; and music filled the air with the varied sounds of joy, or grief, or humility, or triumph; while in the dim, dark recesses of the adytum hovered the Presence, the undefinable Something, whose manifold attributes were defined by a myriad fanciful allegories. All was adapted to enchain the attention of the "common herd;" and yet in all lay hidden, for the thoughtful, a treasury of suggestive lore.

But while thus musing at Dakkeh, our dahabieh waits for us. We must resume our voyage. There is little in the scenery to interest us here, the desert stretching down to the very bank of the river. We pass the village of Seegala,—which is surrounded on all sides by the lonely waste, on whose border rises the sand-column, to stride giant-like across leagues of wilderness, and fall devouringly upon the unhappy caravan,—and pause a moment at Wady Sebou,

or the Valley of the Lions; so named from the sphinxes that guard the approach to its rock-hewn temple.

The sand has nearly entombed these weird guardians of the silence and the desolation. There are four on each hand as you go up to the propyla; but one is wholly covered, and five others more or less completely hidden. Two are unburied, but their features have almost disappeared. The head of another is nearly complete, and very impressive in the awful serenity of its countenance. Two rude statues, about ten feet in height, look out upon the river with lack-lustre eyes: they are unbearded males, roughly executed. Opposite to the entrance a colossus lies on the ground, shattered and half-buried in the sand. Within the propylon is the hall, or pronaos, with five columns on its two longest sides. In front of each, and attached to it, stands an Osiride or colossal figure, sixteen feet in height, having the arms crossed upon the breast, with the flail in one hand, and the priest's wand in the other. The whole fabric is very ancient, belonging to the Ramesean period. Burckhardt suggests that it afforded a model for the later Egyptian architects.* The two statues in front of the propylon, he says, are the miniatures of those in front of the Memnonium, and the sphinxes are seen at Karnak. It is certain that this is one of the earliest of the Nubian sanctuaries.

Yet of a still remoter antiquity must be the temple at Derr. Derr, let us note, is the capital of Nubia, a

* Burckhardt, "Travels in Nubia," p. 90.

large town of mud-built houses, scattered among gardens of herbs, melons, and cucumbers, and groves of palm-trees, on the eastern bank of the river. The governor's house, or palace, is mostly built of burnt brick, and has a magnificent sycamore in front of it.

The temple is partly hewn out of the rock, only its area and portico being in the open air. The area had once eight pillars, of which only the bases remain; and numerous pictures on its walls, of which scarcely a trace is discernible. The corridor, or portico, is faced with four Osiride pillars—pillars supporting huge figures, decorated with the usual symbols. The sanctuary is the rock part of the temple; a hall adorned with six square columns. The walls are sculptured in what has been termed "intaglio relevato;"—that is, the outlines are cut in a groove, whose depth affords the requisite relief to the interior. From its designs we perceive that the temple was built by Rameses the Great, or, more probably, commenced before his time, and completed by that most restless and ubiquitous of architect-kings. Here are his lion, his children, his enemies, his gods, his wealth, his triumphs. A double purpose is answered by this temple; it glorifies Rameses, and it attests his devotion to the deities.

The adytum is small, and the figures which it contained have vanished. There are two lateral chambers of no importance. The entire depth in the rock is about 110 feet.

Once more we are on the Nile, and making our way through the Nubian sands. At times we light

upon very pleasant spots of greenery, upon patches covered with the yellow blossoms of the cotton-shrub, upon fields enriched with blooming crops of grain and pulse. At Tosko we ascend some dangerous rapids formed by a reef of rocks, and pass under the lofty crag crowned by the castle of Ibreem, the Premnis of Strabo, which was defended against Petronius, the lieutenant of Julius Cæsar, by a masculine queen, called in history Candace—though Candace appears to have been a title, and not a name. It was afterwards occupied by Roman and Saracenic garrisons. Its height above the river, which is at this point about a quarter of a mile broad, has been estimated at 200 feet.

Our voyage now brings us to one of the most famous spots in Nubia—Abou-Simbel, or Ipsamboul, the chief wonder, perhaps, of all the Valley of the Nile.

ABOU-SIMBEL.

After all, antiquarian research is a thing of yesterday. What a flood of light has been thrown, within the last century, on the "storied past!" Nineveh, Babylon, Thebes, the Pyramids, the ruined cities of Yucatan: a hundred years ago these were names, or little more, and now we have mapped out their foundations, explored their ruins, investigated their curiosities, in a word, almost reconstructed them, and revived their ancient glories. For generations the drifting sands of the desert accumulated over the sanctuaries of Ipsamboul, and nothing remained but

the head of one colossal statue to excite the wonder of the traveller. None inquired what this solitary ruin *meant*—whether it marked the site of a city, or a palace, or a tomb—until, in the year 1817, the enterprising Belzoni, who possessed a peculiar genius for such achievements, accompanied by Captains Irby and Mangles, undertook an excavation. Their toil was well rewarded, for it brought to light a superb monument of the highest Egyptian art—a monument not unjustly attributed by Champollion to the palmiest epoch of Pharaonic civilization. Every voyager who gazes upon it thrills with admiration, even with awe. Here, exclaims Warburton, the daring Genius of Ethiopian architecture ventured to enter into rivalry with Nature's greatness, and found her material in the very mountains that seemed to bid defiance to her efforts.* You can conceive nothing more singular and impressive, says Mrs. Romer, than the façade of this great temple.† From Burckhardt to Miss Martineau every writer has run riot in eulogium. "Ipsamboul," says Sir F. Henniker, ‡ "is the *ne plus ultra* of Egyptian labour, and in itself an ample recompense for the journey. There is no temple, of either Dendera, Thebes, or Philæ, that can be put in competition with it; and I am well contented to finish my travels in this part with having seen the noblest monument of antiquity that is to be found on the banks of the Nile."

There are two temples at Abou-Simbel, one much

* E. Warburton, "The Crescent and the Cross," chap. xiii.

† Mrs. Romer, "Temples and Tombs of Egypt and Nubia," i. 207.

‡ Sir F. Henniker, "Notes during a Visit to Egypt," &c., p. 160. See also Champollion, Dr. Richardson, and Burckhardt.

larger than the other, but both hewn out of the solid sandstone rock. Let us first visit the more considerable, dedicated to Osiris.

Here, a space of about 187 feet in breadth, and 86 feet in height, is hewn from the mountain, smooth, except for the relievos. This façade is composed of a vast gateway, flanked on either hand by two colossal statues of Rameses II., seated, and each about 65 feet high. There they sit enthroned, as they have sat for ages, and their motionless faces look out upon the desert with a kind of stony calm. From the shoulder to the elbow they measure 15 feet 6 inches; the ears 3 feet 6 inches; the face 7 feet; the beard 5 feet 6 inches; across the shoulders 25 feet 4 inches. The faces are exquisitely moulded. The beauty of the curves is surprising in the stone; the fidelity of the rounding of the muscles, and the grace of the flowing lines of the cheek and jaw.* It is remarkable that the proportions of these colossal visages, though the artist could have had no model to guide him, are admirably harmonious.

Between the legs of these gigantic Ramessids are placed smaller statues—mere pigmies compared with their huge neighbours, and yet considerably larger than human size.

The doorway is about 20 feet high. Above it stands a statue of Isis, wearing the moon as a turban—or, as some say, of Osiris—of about the same dimensions as the doorway, and on either side are some huge hieroglyphical bas-reliefs; while the whole façade is finished by a cornice and line of hieroglyphs and

* Harriet Martineau, "Eastern Life," i. 197.

quaintly-carved figures, surmounted by a frieze of sculptured monkeys, twenty-one in number, and each measuring 8 feet in height, and 6 feet across the shoulders.

On entering the temple you find yourself within "a vast and gloomy hall, such as Eblis might have given Vathek audience in"—a reception-chamber not unworthy of the most potent and splendid of the Egyptian kings. As soon as the eye becomes accustomed to the gloom, there gradually reveals itself, above and around, "a vast aisle, with pillars formed of eight colossal giants, upon whom the light of heaven has never shone." The tops of their mitre-shaped head-dresses, each bearing in front the serpent, the emblem of royalty—for each is an image of the magnificent Rameses—nearly touch the roof. They are all perfectly alike; all bear the crosier and flagellum; and every face is full of deep and expressive meaning. "Vigilant, serene, benign, here they sit, teaching us to inquire reverentially into the early powers and condition of that human mind which was capable of such conceptions of abstract qualities as are represented in their forms." They are the very type and personification of conscious Power, of serene and passionless Intellect—as far removed from the petty things of earth as are the stars from the worm that crawls along the sand. King, or god, or hero, the ideal is ever the same; something *of* the earth, yet infinitely *above* it; the concentrated mind, the absorbed soul;—the highest conception of which man, unassisted by the Bible, seems capable, being that of man himself, free from the stains, and elevated above the passions, of humanity.

SITTING FIGURE AT ABOU-SIMBEL.

These images of the great king are backed by enormous pillars, behind which run two great galleries, whose walls are profusely embellished with hieroglyphical representations of battle and victory —of conquering warriors, flying foemen, bleeding victims, cities besieged, whole companies of chariots, long trains of soldiers and captives—all painted with a surprising truth and vigour.

This superb hall or pronaos measures 57 feet by 52. It opens into a smaller chamber, 22 feet high, 37 broad, and 25½ feet long. This contains four pillars, about 3 feet square, and its walls are also enriched with fine hieroglyphs in excellent preservation. Beyond it lies a shorter chamber, but of the same width, which leads into the adytum (23 feet long and 12 feet broad), where, in front of four large figures seated on rocky thrones, stands a simple altar of the living rock. There, for four thousand years or more, Ra and Khem (or Egypt), Kneph and Osiris, have kept silent watch in the heart of the great mountain over their holy of holies, as if waiting for the advent of some talisman or spell which should pour the fresh life into their petrified veins!

On the right side of the great hall, entering into the temple, may be seen two doors at a short distance from each other, which lead into separate chambers; the first, 39 feet long and 11½ feet wide; the other, 48½ feet by 13 feet 3 inches. At the lateral corners of the entrance from the first into the second apartment are other doors, each conducting into a room hewn out of the solid rock, but with no visible means of ventilation, and each 22½ feet long

by 10 feet broad. These rooms open into others, 43 feet in length and 11 feet in width. The six lateral chambers are nearly covered with graceful representations of offerings to the gods—lamps, vases, flasks, and piles of cake and fruit. The lotus is painted in every stage of growth. And the boat—a frequent symbol everywhere—is incessantly repeated: the seated figure in the convolution at bow and stern, the central pavilion, and the paddle hanging over the side. One of these boats is borne aloft by a procession of priests, as a shrine, upon poles of palm-trunks lashed together. Many of the hieroglyphics are unfinished; yet, though merely sketched, they give one a very favourable idea of the Egyptian manner of drawing.

So much for the greater temple, which is a memorial not unworthy of the great branch of the Hamite race whose genius, devotion, and industry it commemorates and exemplifies.

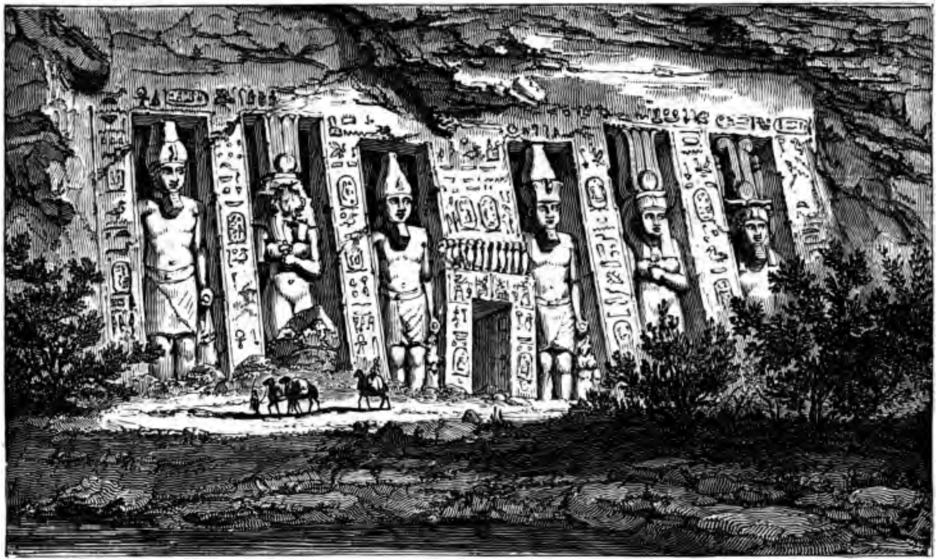
The smaller temple, likewise entirely excavated in the sandstone rock, was dedicated to Isis by Nofre-Ari, queen of Rameses the Great, and dates from about 1320 B.C. Either side of the doorway is ornamented by three statues, 35 feet high, sculptured in relief, and standing erect, with their arms hanging stiffly down. The two central represent Nofre-Ari, the queen, as Athor, whose gentle face is surmounted by the usual crown—the moon contained within the cow's horns. The other images are those of Rameses and his eldest son. Beneath each hand is placed an upright statue, 7 feet in height, which does not, however, rise above the knees of its principal. These

are the children of the royal couple. The part of the rock which has been hewn down for the façade of the temple measures 111 feet in length.*

The devices begin on the north side, with a figure of Rameses brandishing his falchion, as if about to strike. The goddess behind him lifts her hand in supplication for the victim; while Osiris, in front, holds forth the great knife, as if to command the slaughter. He is seated there as the Judge, and decides the fate of the nations conquered by the Egyptian king. The next object is a colossal statue of about 30 feet high, wrought in a deep recess of the rock: it is standing, and two tall feathers rise up from the middle of the head-dress, with the globe or moon on each side. Then comes a mass of hieroglyphics, which are also thickly sculptured on each side of the door, and above them are seated Osiris and the hawk-headed deity. On each side of the passage, as you enter the temple, offerings are presented to Isis, who holds in her hand the lotus-headed sceptre, surrounded with numerous emblems and inscriptions. This hall is supported by six square pillars, all bearing the head of Athor on the front face of their capitals; the other three faces being occupied with sculptures, once gaily painted, and still showing blue, red, and yellow colours. The shafts are covered with hieroglyphs, and representations of Osiris, Isis, Kneph, and other gods.

Within the outer or entrance hall is a transverse corridor, ending in two rude chambers. And beyond the corridor lies the sanctuary, or *adytum*,

* Dr. Richardson, "Travels along the Mediterranean," &c., 420–429.



TEMPLE OF ISIS AT ABOU-SIMBEL.

where Isis appears in all her majesty, with the emblematic disk of night's beautiful luminary above her head. In another part she stands, as a cow, in a boat surrounded by water-plants; the king and queen presenting rare gifts to this "Lady of Aboshek, the foreign land."

The temple, which is only a few yards from the river's brink, and about twenty feet above the present level of its water, extends seventy-six feet into the rock. A number of ovals, or *cartouches* as Champollion calls them, containing the name and prænomen of Rameses the Great, are cut in several places of the square border that encloses the façade of the temple like a frame, and on the buttresses between the colossal figures.

These edifices, even as we see them now, in desolation and decay, produce a strange feeling of awe in the mind of the spectator; but what must have been their effect when the shrine contained its mystic idols; when the open portals revealed a dim perspective of sculptured columns and decorated walls to the wondering and worshipping multitude, far back as the holy of holies itself; when the roof glowed with gold and azure, like a starry sky; when the colossal forms planted in silent majesty on their stony pedestals represented to all who gazed the mysterious deities in whose power they believed with an unquestioning faith; when along the torch-lighted corridors paced the long procession of king, and priests, and nobles in gorgeous robes; when the inner sanctuary was filled with clouds of incense, and the rock resounded with the surging music of ten thou-

sand voices; when the temple glowed with all the pomp and splendour of an allegorical creed, and every hieroglyph and emblem—now so cold and meaningless—conveyed to the votary some living idea, some eloquent and sublime truth? But the old creed has passed away: where its singular rites were formerly celebrated the bats have made their home; and curious pilgrims come from far lands, unknown to Egyptian science, to explore its inmost shrines, its most sacred *penetralia*, and speculate upon their origin and purpose; while the Earth rejoices in that broader, holier, and more hopeful religion which was proclaimed by the Son of God in the plains and valleys of Palestine, and whose truth was attested by his death on the cross of Calvary. The most intellectual creed ever devised by man has sunk into the dust, and the simple faith, preached by Christ, spreads over the world like a wave of glory!

XIV.

Soleb and Meroe.

......" Wild and desolate
Those courts, where once the mighty sate ;
Nor longer on those mouldering towers
Were seen the past of fruits and flowers....
Neither priest nor rites were there."
MOORE.

IN the cliff, nearly opposite Ipsamboul, is excavated another rock-temple, called Gebel Adha, which was used in later times as a Christian church. It was a curious sight, remarks Mr. Warburton, to see images of our Saviour and the Virgin blazoned in glowing colours on these walls and roofs, surrounded by trophies and memorials of the idols whose worship they had swept away. Steps, also hewn in the rock, descended to a certain point towards the river, and then suddenly ceased: a proof, among others, that the level of the Nile was much higher (even so lately as the Christian consecration of this temple) than at present.*

The ordinary route of Nile voyagers terminates at Wady Halfa, where begins a succession of rapids and rocks, extending up the river for about one hundred miles to the Second Cataract, which is impas-

* Eliot Warburton, "The Crescent and the Cross," chap. xii.

sable, in ascending the river, for boats. The immediate country is generally beautiful as well as fertile. In some places the river broadens into a channel of four or five miles span, enclosing numerous romantic islands clothed with a luxuriant vegetation.

Near the landing place at Wady Halfa moulder the ruins of a temple begun, if not wholly erected, by two of the Theban kings soon after the expulsion of the Shepherd race, and long before the grand structures of Thebes had been conceived by the genius of Rameses. "About this time," says Miss Martineau, "Moses was watching the erection of the great obelisk (which we call Cleopatra's Needle) at Heliopolis, where he studied." The remains are few, and only remarkable on account of their extreme antiquity, and because they exhibit the rudiments of the so-called Doric column.

From this spot it is customary to make a pilgrimage to the rock of Abousir, or Abooseer: a steep and craggy hill of red sandstone, about 200 feet high, which overlooks the whole range of the Cataract, and commands a far view of the Nubian wilderness—of that wide, desolate waste, which was once a fertile and populous kingdom. The only living things are a partridge or two, a gazelle, and a jerboa; though in some remote recesses the hyænas lurk, and in the shallow waters of the river the crocodiles are basking unseen. The whole scene is composed of desert, river, and black basaltic rocks, except where, against the dim horizon, may be traced the rounded and softened outlines of the blue Arabian hills. It is one of those things which the memory never lets

die; whose rare and weird character gives it an immortal life.

At a considerable distance above the Second Cataract, and far beyond the usual limits of Nile-travel, is the Temple of Soleb; of sufficient interest to justify a brief description.

The remains of two sphinxes guard either side of the approach, which terminated at a flight of stone steps leading to the main building. The front of the portal, now in chaotic ruin, measured 175 feet in length, and the breadth of the steps was not less than 57 feet. The wall is 24 feet thick, and honey-combed with numerous cells, whose object cannot now be determined.

The first chamber, 100 feet broad and 89 feet deep, is embellished on three sides by a row of pillars, making in the whole, when perfect, thirty columns. The diameter of the base of each is 5 feet 7 inches; the height about 40 feet. They are covered with hieroglyphics. Only a few columns are left entire.

The second chamber had twenty-four pillars, all of which have been prostrated and shattered by some sudden subsidence of the ground. A few feet of masonry indicate the site of the adytum, which appears to have contained twelve columns, sculptured with figures about 3 feet high. From these it has been conjectured that the temple was dedicated to Amun-Ra, the Greek Jupiter-Ammon. The general character of its architecture is light and graceful. The columns are shapely, and from their rich colour and elegant proportions remind the traveller of

TEMPLE OF SOLEB.

Segeste and Sunium, rather than of Thebes and Memphis; of the harmony and sensuousness of the Greek, rather than of the solemnity and massive grandeur of the Egyptian.

Our ascent of the river terminates at Meroë, or Merawe, a portion of the ancient Ethiopia.* A glance at the map of Nubia will show the reader that at Old Dongola, in latitude 18° nearly, the Nile suddenly turns to the north-east, ascending above the 20th parallel, when it retraces its course in a southerly direction to its point of confluence with the Tacazze. The peninsular tract thus enclosed was the ancient kingdom of Meroë, whose capital, Napata, where Queen Candace held her state, is now represented by Old Dongola.† The exuberant fertility of its soil, its numerous animals, and its valuable mineral deposits, made it, at a very remote time, the seat of a powerful kingdom, which attracted thither a constant stream of commerce, and exported its treasures to Carthage, Arabia, and India. About 1000 B.C. it was esteemed one of the leading states of the world, though nominally a tributary of the Egyptian Empire. Two centuries and a half later it regained its independence, under King Sabaco, and for eighty years held Egypt in subjection. It was afterwards subdued by Cambyses, who fortified the capital-town, and called it Meroë. Gradually the Egyptians emigrated thither; the country lost its ancient character; and, after being invaded and conquered by

* That is, the country of the "sun-burnt" (αἴθω and ὤψ).

† Hoskins, "Æthiopia," p. 67. Some authorities, however, place it at Gebel el Birkel (or Jebel Barkal).

the Romans, sank into a decay as rapid as its former prosperity was surprising. Even in the reign of Nero nothing remained of its past splendour but piles of shapeless ruins and fragments of mighty buildings.

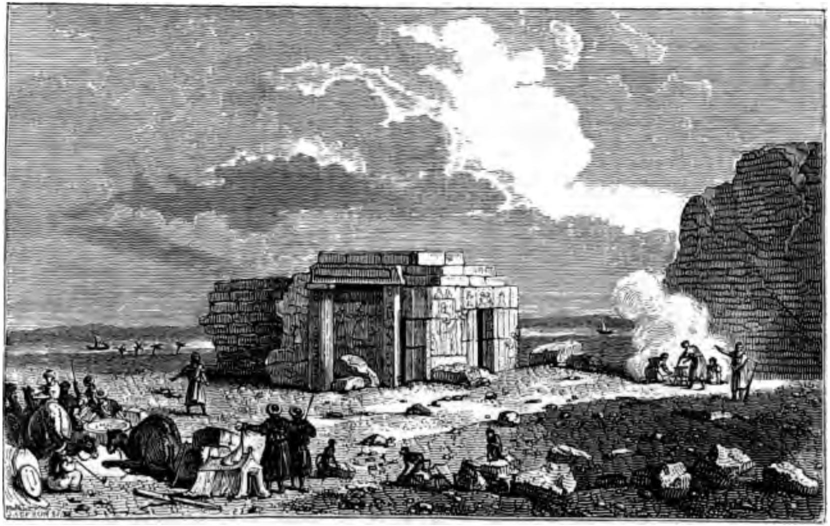
There would seem to have been two great Cushite cities—Napata (the present Old Dongola), and Meroë, which retains its ancient name. At both these places there are extant memorials of surpassing interest. At Old Dongola we are told of the remains of two great temples, the larger measuring 450 feet in length and 159 feet in breadth. The principal chamber is 147 feet by 111, and the next in importance 123 by 102 feet. These, and various other monuments bearing the name of Amenoph III., lie scattered about the base of Gebel el Birkel, or the Holy Mountain,* and are partly excavated from it. There are also seventeen pyramids; and at El Bellal, seven miles up the river, is a range of nearly forty loftier structures of the same character—all bearing sculptures and ornaments of extreme rudeness, and some apparently of an earlier date than even the earliest on the Egyptian ruins.

Meroë, like the kingdom of which it was the stately capital, occupies a peninsula, formed by the Nile and the Tacazze, about 560 miles above Assouan, between the fifth and sixth cataracts, in latitude 17° north. It is now conspicuous for its great necropolis, whose pyramids, though inferior to those of Egypt in size,

* The peculiar form of this holy hill must have attracted man's notice in all ages. It starts up from the plain, a perpendicular mass of sandstone, nearly 400 feet high, and a mile and a half in circuit (lat. 18° 25′ north). The clouds, attracted to this eminence from every point, descend upon it in copious showers. Hence we need hardly wonder if, of yore, it was believed that the gods visited their chosen priests and held mystic communion with them on this sacred mount.

surpass them in architectural excellence, and exceed them in number. An immense plain is literally crowded with them! A modern traveller counted eight different groups of these mysterious piles—temples, tombs, observatories—whatever may have been their object—one containing twenty-five, one twenty-three, and one thirteen pyramids. Each has a portico, invariably facing towards the east. Each is built of granite. The corners are partly ornamented, and the walls of the pyla are decorated with sculpture, in which some of the figures appear to be employed in making offerings for the departed. Isis, Osiris, Horus, and Thoth, also figure conspicuously.

This necropolis is situated near a place now called Assom. At two neighbouring villages, Naga and Messoura, the ruins consist chiefly of temples. Those of the former place lie about twenty miles south-east of Shendi, and nearly the same distance from the Nile. The remains of the principal edifice show that it was dedicated to the god Amun. An avenue of huge rams couched upon massive pedestals leads into an open portico of ten columns; out of which, after threading his way through a similar gallery, the traveller arrives at the pylon. Adjoining is a colonnade of eight pillars, and beyond this a hall opens into the adytum. Columns, walls, and doors are of hewn stone; the remainder of the structure of bricks, with a coating which still retains traces of the original painting. The sculptures of gods, and kings, and queens; of attendants making oblations; of the insignia of royal power, exhibit a remarkable energy and truthfulness. But from their general character,



TEMPLE AT MEROE.

as well as from the arrangement of the temple, may reasonably infer that it is of greater antiqui than any similar structure in Egypt.

The western temple is smaller, but more copiousl embellished. War-pictures adorn the pyla; and th king and queen appear with an eagle and a globe over their heads, and the emblem of royal power on their head-dress. It is noticeable that here the queens are represented as heroines and conquerors, as the independent wearers of royalty. And it is in reference to this very kingdom Strabo remarks, that among the Ethiopians the women are also armed. From other historical sources we gather that no Salic law prevailed in Meroë. A long succession of queens, with the title Candace, must have reigned here; and even when, in course of time, the seat of the empire was removed from Meroë to Napata, near Gebel el Birkel, a female sovereign, so distinguished, exercised the supreme power. It is therefore in consonance with Ethiopian usage to see a queen in warlike array by her consort's side, though the custom is peculiar to that celebrated people.

The colossal figures at Naga are described as of surpassing excellence. Every traveller praises their boldness of outline and vividness of expression, no less than the general richness and perfection of the workmanship.

Cailliaud, the French traveller, is our principal authority for the antiquities at Messoura, which he describes as an extensive valley in the desert, eight hours' journey from Shendi towards the south-east, and six leagues from the Nile. The ruins here are

considerable. They consist of eight small temples, all connected by corridors and terraces, and the whole forming an immense edifice, surrounded by a double enclosure. From the main central building radiate, in every direction, connecting passages and galleries, which vary from 300 to 185 feet in length. Each temple has its pylon and sanctuary; and all the buildings are placed in an exact order, consisting of eight temples or sanctuaries, as already stated, forty-one chambers, twenty-four courts, three galleries, and fourteen staircases or flights of steps. The remains cover an area of ground nearly half a mile in circumference.

The different parts, however, are not on the colossal scale to which the Egyptian antiquities have accustomed us. The largest temple, says Cailliaud,* is only 51 feet long; the pillars are decorated with figures in the Egyptian style; others in the same portico are fluted like the Grecian: on the base of one seemed discernible the traces of a zodiac. Time and the elements seem to have been willing to spare to us the observatory of Meroë. It excites one's wonder to discover so few hieroglyphics in this mass of ruins; the six pillars which form the portico of the central temple alone present a few examples, for all the other walls are free from sculpture. Six hundred paces from the ruins lie the remains of two other small temples, as also the outlines of a considerable tank, surrounded by little hills, which must have protected it from the sand. But there are no traces of any city, no heaps of débris, no tombs.

* Cailliaud, "Voyage à Meroe, au Fleuve Blanc," &c. (Paris, 1826-27).

If Meroë had stood in this place, the pyramids would not have been situated two days' journey from it. "I believe," adds Cailliaud, "that a college or seminary of learning was established on this spot; the form of the building and the style of the architecture seem to prove it; but the city itself must have been situated in the vicinity of the sepulchres, where the pyramids are still found."

Heeren, in his "Historical Researches," concludes from the facts recorded by Cailliaud, that Messoura was the site of the once famous "Oracle of Jupiter-Ammon." He remarks that a mere glance at the ground-plan of the ruins would support this opinion. Such a maze of passages and courts could only be intended as an imposing introduction for the neophyte or votary to the secret sanctuary in the midst. According to Diodorus, he observes, the temple of Jupiter did not stand in the city of Meroë, but at some distance from it, in the Desert. When, again, a certain sovereign resolved to free himself from the dominion of the priesthood, he marched, with a company of soldiers, to the sequestered spot where the sanctuary with the golden temple stood, and surprising the dismayed priests, put them and their attendants to death. Nor is the smallness of the edifice any objection to this view of the subject, for the same remark might be applied to the Ammonium in the Libyan Desert. It was probably intended only as an asylum for the "sacred ship," which is understood to have been placed between the pillars of the sacred shrine. Its locality in the wilderness appears to be less extraordinary, if you reflect that it was situated

on one of the great routes of commercial intercourse between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

Here we stand, if we may accept the theory of Heeren,* on that remarkable spot which the ancients regarded as the cradle of the arts and sciences; where hieroglyphic writing was invented; where temples and pyramids had already sprung up, while Egypt remained in ignorance of their existence. Hence flowed the mighty stream of civilization, following the course of the Nile itself, until Greece also drank of its living waters; and gathering in volume as they rolled westward, they overspread in time the limits of the Roman Empire, and extended their beneficial influence to the furthest bounds of Christendom.

In describing the antiquities, both of Egypt and Nubia, we have sometimes had occasion to refer to the "sacred ship," or "boat," which appears among their sculptures. The king called Sesostris is said to have dedicated one of cedar-wood to Amun, or Ammon, the chief deity and tutelary spirit of Thebes; it was 420 feet long, and resplendent with gold on the outside, and silver within. The use of this emblem is supposed to have denoted the foreign extraction of their priesthood and religious rites, and to have kept alive in the minds of the worshippers the distant land from whence their creed was originally derived.† Once a year, says Diodorus Siculus, the Greek historian, the sanctuary or shrine of Zeus was borne across the river in solemn pomp to the Libyan bank, and after a few days brought back, as if the god were returning from

* Heeren, "Historical Researches," &c., i. 403-406.

† Dr. Russell, "Nubia and Abyssinia," p. 258; Heeren, "Historical Researches," &c., i. 301.

Ethiopia. This grand procession is represented, as we have seen, among the sculptures of the great temple at Karnak; the sacred ship of Amun floats on the Nile, with its entire equipment, and is towed along by another boat. It is probable that Homer alludes to this ceremony when he describes Jupiter's twelve days' visit to the Ethiopians: he had heard of it from some traveller's tradition, from some floating legend, or vague recollection, and adapted it to the Greek deity:—

> "The sire of gods, and all th' ethereal train,
> On the warm limits of the furthest main,
> Now mix with mortals, nor disdain to grace
> The feasts of Ethiopia's blameless race;
> Twelve days the powers indulge the genial rite,
> Returning with the twelfth revolving light."
>
> HOMER, *Iliad*, bk. i. (*Pope's Transl.*)

XV.

The Oases.

......"The tufted isles
That verdant rise amid the Libyan wild."
THOMSON.

THOUGH they are not included in the Nile Valley, our view of Ethiopian antiquities would be incomplete if we omitted all reference to the Libyan Oases. These fertile spots lie amidst a dreary ocean of sand, like "islands of the blest." The Coptic word, *ouahé*,* literally means "an inhabited place;" and an oasis is the solitary strip of vegetation and verdure where the Libyan tribes are able to pitch their tents. Elsewhere, all is burning sand—leafless, waterless; no shelter from the fierce rays of the tropic sun, which, at noonday, strikes the wanderer with deadly shafts of fire; no springs where he can slake his torturing thirst; no pleasant hill or leafy grove where he can rest his wearied limbs. Nor is the oasis in itself an Armida's garden of enchantments—a Happy Valley, like that of Rasselas: it becomes delightful from its contrast with the sur-

* Oasis is also said to be derived from the Arabic *wadi*, a ravine, corrupted by the Greeks into ὀασίς.

rounding desolation, just as a mouldy crust of bread seems an inexpressibly delicious viand to the poor wretch who has hungered through days and nights of famine. By the Greeks and Romans they were used as places of banishment; and many an earnest Christian, in the early days of persecution, was doomed to linger out his life in the oases of the Libyan Desert.* They lie a few days' journey from the Nile, and were known to the Egyptians during the twelfth dynasty under the name of Sutur-Khenu. They are first mentioned by Herodotus in his vivid narration of the destruction of the Persian hosts by the blasts of the simoom. Every schoolboy knows that one of them—the Siwah Oasis, and its temple of Amun or Ammon—was visited by Alexander the Great, and that the priests declared the Greek conqueror the son of the god, and the destined lord of the entire globe. They are also described by Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, Olympiodorus; by the Arab travellers Edrisi (1150 A.D.) and Abulfeda (1240 A.D.); by Leo Africanus (1513 A.D.); and, among modern explorers, by Browne (1792), Cailliaud (1819), Minutoli (1824), Sir Archibald Edmonstone (1819), and Mr. Hoskins (1837). The ancients only knew of three oases, but they are really four in number.† These are:—

1. The *Great Oasis* (Oasis Magna)—chief town, *El Kargeh;*

* The poet Juvenal was banished there by the Emperor Domitian; and Athanasius is supposed to have found in them an asylum during the supremacy of the Arians.

† See Hoskins, "Visit to the Great Oasis" (London, 1837); Sir A. Edmonstone, "Journey to Two of the Oases" (1819); Modern Traveller, "Egypt," vol. ii., &c.

2. The *Little Oasis* (Oasis Parva)—chief town, *El Kasr;*
3. The *Northern Oasis*, or *Siwah;* and
4. The *Western Oasis*, or *Dakkel*, mentioned by Olympiodorus, and re-discovered by Edmonstone.

1. The *Great Oasis* lies about 125 miles west of the Nile. It consists of an extensive depression of the soil, watered by a stream which rises near the village of Genah, on the north-west, and after traversing the oasis disappears in the sand. On its banks flourish groves of palms and acacias; and the ground is clothed with a coarse verdure, which, after the rains, blooms with an attractive freshness. Springs are numerous, though all strongly impregnated with sulphur and iron, and so warm that the water cannot be drunk until it has been cooled in an earthen jar. They continue full, however, all the year; a blessing which can only be appreciated by travellers in the desert.

This is the first stage of the Darfur caravan, which starts from El Siout, about four days' journey. It is nearly the same distance from Farshout, the second stage.

The principal ruins lie about seven miles from El Kargeh, the metropolis of the oasis. They are situated in the midst of a rich wood of palm, acacia, and other trees, with a bright stream of water in front. The entry to the great temple is through a *dromos*, or avenue, of ten columns on each side, now prostrate in hopeless chaos. The façade of the temple itself is

profusely embellished with colossal figures and hieroglyphic inscriptions. Through a finely sculptured doorway the traveller passes into a superb hall, 60 feet by 54, with twelve pillars, each 13 feet in circumference. A species of screen separates it from the second chamber, which measures 56 feet by 18, and is traced all over with figures and other carvings on stucco, which have once been painted. The third apartment, 31 feet by 29, is also ornamented; and the carvings in the *adytum* or sanctuary, 20 feet by 8, are of the richest workmanship, though much blackened and defaced by smoke.

To the east of the temple stand three detached propyla, or gateways, of remarkable interest. Among the figures sculptured on the first may be seen a colossal representation of Darius making offerings to Amun-Ra, Osiris, and Isis. On the roof are four eagles or vultures, with outstretched wings, painted red and blue. The carvings on the second propylon are much defaced. On the third remains an inscription, in Greek letters, containing a rescript, in the second year of the Emperor Galba, enjoining certain reforms in the Egyptian administration. An avenue of sphinxes formerly led up to the temple in one direction.

In the vicinity lies a superb necropolis, or cemetery, containing nearly two hundred tombs, each the receptacle of a number of mummies. Most of them are square, and crowned with domes, while the columns placed around, with their Doric and Corinthian capitals, show that they belong to a comparatively recent period. One large sepulchre is divided

into aisles like a church; and that it was used as such by the Christian exiles is clearly shown from the traces of saints painted on the walls. All bear the Greek cross, and the famous Egyptian hieroglyph, the *crux ansata*, or cross with a handle, whose original purport cannot be determined, but which the Christians naturally adopted as an emblem of their faith. The origin of these remarkable sepulchres is, to some extent, involved in obscurity. As they were designed for the reception of mummies, they can hardly be later than the first century, for the practice of embalming was discontinued soon after the introduction of Christianity; and if they were constructed by the Romans, they must date from a period posterior to the conquests of Pompey, B.C. 82.

There are several other remains in the vicinity of El Kargeh, in which the relics of the Egyptian creed appear combined with the symbols of the Christian worship, leading to the inference that these edifices were repaired in the early ages of our faith after being abandoned by their ancient occupants.*

2. *El Kasr*, or the *Little Oasis*, is a valley surrounded with rocks, about 12 miles long and 6 miles broad, four or five days' journey to the southeast of Siwah, which appears at one time to have been wholly cultivated, and to have fully repaid the labourer's toil. The remains are those of a Greek temple, several rock-tombs, a Christian church, a necropolis, and a Roman triumphal arch. There are some hot springs, and especially one, 60 feet deep, whose temperature varies several times in the twenty-

* Dr. Russell, "History of Ancient and Modern Egypt," p. 361.

four hours. The natives of this sequestered spot live chiefly upon rice, and their whole wealth consists of a few camels, donkeys, cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, and the ubiquitous date-palm.

3. *Siwah*, or the *Oasis of Ammon*, which has been repeatedly visited, lies to the west of the Natron Lakes, in lat. 29° 12′ north, and long. 26° 6′ east, and about 120 miles from the Nile river. It extends 3 miles in length, and between 8 and 9 in breadth. A large portion of the soil blooms with the tufted crests of the palm, but in its gardens abound the pomegranate and the fig, the olive, the vine, the apricot, the plum, and even the apple. Tepid springs occur throughout the district, and a salt lake at Arachieh, which is regarded with superstitious veneration. The mythical Fountain of the Sun wells forth in a pleasant grove of date-trees at Siwah Shargieh. It was dedicated of old, as well as a small temple that stood upon its bank, to the great solar god, Amun-Ra. Travellers describe it as a small marsh, rather than a well, about 90 feet long and 60 feet broad. Its waters, which are remarkable for their transparency, undergo a diurnal change: they are warmer in the night than in the day, and every morning throw off a thick vapour or steam. The bubbles constantly rising to the surface reveal the chemical action which they undergo.

The two chief villages in the oasis are El Garah Gharney, and Menchyeh: the population exceeds 8000.

At Om-Beydah, about 5 miles' distance from the rock-built town of Siwah, moulder the ruins of an

Egyptian temple, which most antiquaries agree in regarding as the ancient "Oracle of Ammon." The vestiges of a triple enclosure, enormous blocks of granite lying prostrate, and portions still standing of the walls and gateway, prove that it must have been a superb and massive pile. The only chamber which can now be distinctly traced was 112 feet in length; the whole area occupies a rectangular space about 360 feet by 300. The decorations are of the later Egyptian character, and embody representations of the ram-headed god, processions of priests, councils of deities, and of other objects common to these sacred structures; but time, and, perhaps, human barbarism have dealt so violently with these interesting ruins that enough remains to stimulate—far too little to gratify—the antiquary's legitimate curiosity.

Minutoli believes this temple to have been erected by Nekt-har-hebi (Nectanebo I., about 387–369 B.C.), in honour of the god Khnum, who was here identified or blended with Ammon—Ammon Khnumis or Chembis. He was the great water-deity, and consequently presided over the water to which the formation and conservation of the oasis was due. Here was the celebrated Oracle of Ammon—the Jupiter-Ammon of the Greeks—which obtained so world-wide a renown that Alexander the Great marched through the desert to consult its priests (B.C. 331). The response was delivered either by some movement of the statue of the god, or by the appearance of a spirit or phantom. When it first rose into repute is uncertain; it fell into decay after the establishment of Christianity.

The antiquities of the Siwah Oasis are very numerous. Among them may be noted a series of rock-tombs, on a magnificent scale, excavated in a neighbouring mountain. Temple after temple, catacombs, churches, and convents—all in ruins, but all hallowed by sacred associations—spread far away to the westward, and testify to the existence in this region of a large population at some remote period. At a short distance from the sacred lake of Arachieh lie the remains of a beautiful Doric temple, which, occurring in the heart of the Libyan Desert, cannot fail to excite the traveller's wonder. Other ancient relics are crumbling among the sands of these dreary wastes, whose origin and history will never be known to man; oblivion has descended upon them.

4. The *Western Oasis*, or *Dakkel*, is situated about 78 miles south-west of Siout, lat. 26° north. The principal ruin is at Duer el Hadjur; an ancient temple, 50 feet long by 25 feet wide, presenting nothing of peculiar importance. The first chamber measures 24 feet by 20, and is supported by four pillars, each 5 feet diameter in the shaft. Figures, hieroglyphs, and sacred sculptures embellish the walls, and over one of the doors may be seen the winged globe, encompassed by the serpent, which symbolized eternity.

Here we terminate our interesting researches in Ethiopia. We have ascended the Nile Valley far beyond the usual limit of travel, and made a brief excursion into the Libyan waste; everywhere meeting with the memorials of a great and powerful people, with the

monuments of a splendid and highly intellectual civilization. We have explored the mysterious depths of the Pyramids. We have gazed on the ineffable tranquillity of the Sphinx. We have mused among the imposing ruins of Thebes and Memphis, and meditated in the sombre valley of the Tombs of the Kings. We have wondered at the evidences always before us of an esoteric creed and a sublime art flourishing in those ages long, long ago, which we too often decry as times of ignorance and barbarism. What magnificence has astonished us! What gorgeous conceptions have made our hearts throb and set our brains on fire! And if at times we have seen the traces of human passion, we have forgotten them in the higher and more abundant testimony to human greatness. If we have seen the desolation of ruin on either hand, we have forgotten it in our remembrance of a glorious past, and in the magical aspect which the land of Osiris and Rameses still wears for the thoughtful observer. They, at least, says an eloquent writer,* are little to be envied, in whose hearts the great charities of the imagination lie dead, and for whom the fancy has no power to repress the importunity of painful impressions, or to raise what is ignoble, and disguise what is discordant, in a scene so rich in its remembrances, so surpassing in its beauty. Egypt, at present, is a dead giant: who knows but that in the course of ages it may wake at "the blast of some dread horn," and live again?

* Ruskin, "Stones of Venice," i. c. 1, § 2.

APPENDIX.

EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHICS.

"And the learn'd walls with hieroglyphics grac'd."—POPE.

SO many allusions are made in the preceding pages to the Egyptian hieroglyphics, that it seems desirable to afford the youthful reader some explanation of their character and meaning.

The term "hieroglyphics," from the Greek ἱερος and γλυφω, simply means "sacred sculptures;" but it is now applied to those representations of real or imaginary objects by which the Egyptians expressed language. It is supposed that they employed in all about one thousand of these; and by their means they were enabled to convey their ideas to others with extraordinary fulness and accuracy. Their variety is very great. All kinds of quaint ideal forms—the celestial spheres, animals, fishes, reptiles, the different parts of the human body, costume, works of art and science,—all these were made vehicles of thought and sentiment. They were engraved in relief, or sunk below the surface, on walls and public monuments, and similar permanent materials, or they were traced in outline with a pen of reed on wood, papyri, and slabs of stone. The for-

mer class of hieroglyphics are sometimes embellished with colours, and used as ornamentation; sometimes they are shaded, as it were, of one uniform hue, and sometimes they are sculptured and plain. When variously coloured, they are called polychrome; when shaded, monochrome; when traced in outline on the papyri, linear. They are either arranged in columns perpendicularly, or in horizontal rows, or scattered about the picture they are intended to describe. But it should be remembered that they almost invariably face all in the same direction; and when attached to figures, in the direction of these figures. They form a curious and even fantastic written language, and represent, in their various uses, the earliest processes in the invention of writing.

Hieroglyphics, according to their prevailing applications, are arranged in three great classes:—1. Symbolic; 2. Hieratic; 3. Demotic (or popular). They are also divided into *Ideographs*, or those which represent "ideas;" and *Phonetics*, or those which represent "sounds."

1. Symbolic. These may be classified in three groups:—First, the "iconographic," or "ideographic," where symbols are used in direct imitation of natural objects—the course which would suggest itself to men in the earliest stage of written thought. Thus, ○ a circle, would naturally represent the sun; Ↄ a crescent, the moon;  a male figure, man;  a dog, canine animals, and the like. A female figure stands for woman. Put a man and a woman together, and you convey the idea of "mankind." After awhile, men would begin to supply these natural

objects to convey some figurative meaning, and thus create a second group of symbolic hieroglyphics—viz., the "anaglyphic," or "tropical." For instance, the dog is faithful, and the symbol "dog" was accordingly employed to represent fidelity; the jackal is cunning, and  therefore conveyed the idea of craft. Similarly, *a leg caught in a trap* means deceit; *a youth with a finger in his mouth*, an infant; *a woman beating a tambourine*, joy. In time, to prevent the accumulation of symbols to an inconvenient extent, one hieroglyph was made to represent a number of collateral ideas. A seated male figure, which originally signified man, now indicated all the functions and relationships of man, as brother, father, priest, governor, labourer,—the exact meaning being ascertained by its connection with the phonetic symbols preceding it. The circle ○ thus came to represent all precious stones; and  two legs walking, all locomotive actions. It is said that this class of symbols amounts to about 175; but further research will probably increase the number.

The third group, "allegorical," or "enigmatic," includes those objects employed conventionally as emblems of other objects. In this way, two water-plants, of slightly different form, stand for Upper and Lower Egypt; a hawk, for the god Anubis.

Another class of hieroglyphics is the Phonetic, in which the sign represents not an object, but a sound. The Egyptian syllabarium consisted of about 130 of these signs, and was constructed, according to Champollion, on the following principle:—The figure representing a letter was the likeness of some animal,

or other object, whose name began with that letter. For instance, our word eagle begins with E. If we drew an eagle, and always used that figure instead of the letter, we should employ a phonetic hieroglyph. The initial letter of the Egyptian word for *eagle* (*Ahorn*) is A; in the Egyptian alphabet the figure of an eagle, therefore, stands for A. But each figure represented not only a letter, but a syllable. Twenty-nine letters constitute the Egyptian alphabet at the best period of the language, or from the fourth to the twenty-first dynasty; and twenty-nine familiar objects represent these letters and their corresponding monosyllables.

Symbol.	Represented by
Ăá	an eagle.
Aa	an arm.
Aa	a reed.
Ba	a heron.
Ba	a leg.
Fi	a cerastes.
Ga	an eaglet.
Ga	a vase.
Gi	a viper.
Ha	a leg of a stool.
Ha	a house.
Ha	a papyrus plant.
Hă	fore-part of a lion.
Hi	twisted cord.
Hu	a tusk.
Hu	a club.
Iu	two reeds.
Iu	two oblique strokes.
Kă	a bowl.
KHa	water-lily leaf.
KHa	a mormorus fish.
KHa	a mace.
KHi	a sieve.
KHu, or **Au**	a calf.
KHu, or **Au**	a garment.
Lu, or **Ru**	a lion.
Lu, or **Ru**	a mouth.
Ma	a pen.
Ma	a weight.
Mă	a hole.
Mu	an owl.
Mu	a vulture.
Na	a water-line.
Na	a red crown.
Nu	a vase.
Pa	a flying goose.
Pu	a shutter.
Qa	a knee.
Qa	a stand.
Sa	top of a quiver.
Sa	a goose.
Sa	a woof.
Su	a reed.
Su	a bolt.
S(eu) or **S(et)**	back of seat or chair
SHa	a garden.
SHa	part of dress.
SHi	a pool.
Ta	a spindle.
Ti	a hand.
Ti	a twisted cord with two loops.
Tu	a muller.
Ui	a duckling.
Ui	a cord curved or twisted.

About ninety additional signs were added to the preceding after the twenty-first dynasty.

It should be added that very often the syllable was written in full; that is, both the initial letter and the vowel were given. As Ha by Ha and Ahorn (a papyrus plant, and an eagle).

This explanation is necessarily imperfect, but it will enable the reader to form some idea of the mode in which the written language of the Egyptians was originated and developed.

2. The Hieratic character may be described as abridged hieroglyphs, reduced into a kind of cursive or running hand, with no very exact resemblance to their original form. As its name implies, it was confined to the priests, and was employed for state papers, religious treatises, rituals, and legal documents; but also, at a later period, for all records and memoranda of a public and private character. The Hieratic language prevailed from the era of the fourth dynasty to the third century after Christ.

3. The third class is the Demotic, or "popular"—also called the Enchorial ("of the country")—and was that which embodied the language of the common people. It was a still more cursive modification of the hieroglyphics; and, being simple in form, was universally employed for contracts, public documents, and, as the knowledge of hieroglyphics decreased, even for religious matters. It prevailed from the beginning of the sixth century before Christ to the third century of the Christian era, when the early Christians introduced the Greek alphabet.

The clew by which Dr. Young and Champollion

were guided independently to the supposed principles of hieroglyphic interpretation was the famous Rosetta Stone. This monument was discovered in 1799. It bore a trilingual inscription on its surface; an inscription in Hieroglyphical, Demotic, and Greek characters, purporting to be a decree of the priests of Egypt in council at Memphis in honour of Ptolemy V. (about B.C. 196). A close investigation of these characters—first by Dr. Young in 1818, and afterwards by Champollion in 1822—led to the adoption of certain rules of interpretation, which, though their accuracy was impugned by the late Sir George Cornewall Lewis, have been laboriously illustrated by Lepsius, Bunsen, Jablonski, Hincks, Birch, Goodwin, Heath, Chabus, and others.

The invention of hieroglyphics, called *Neter Kharu*, or "divine words," was ascribed to the god Thoth, the Egyptian Logos, "lord of the hieroglyphs." Pliny attributes it to Menon. Hieroglyphics were not understood by the lower classes, to whom they were as great a mystery as our printed characters are to the peasant who can neither read nor write.

For fuller particulars on this interesting subject I refer the reader to the article "Hieroglyphics" in the "Encyclopædia Britannica;" Champollion, "Grammaire Egyptienne" (Paris, 1841–61); Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, "Astronomy of the Ancients," chap. vi.; Birch, "Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphics;" "Edinburgh Review" for July 1862; D. I. Heath, M.A., "The Exodus Papyri;" and Bunsen, "Egypt's Place in the World's History" (translated by C. J. Cotterell, M.A.)

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